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BRITISH POLICY IN THE CRISIS

BY STEPHEN GWYNN

THE LOCARNO TREATY

By ARTICLE 1 the signatories engage to observe the stipulations of Articles 42 and 43 of the Versailles Treaty, by which Germany is forbidden to assemble armed forces in the demilitarized zone, or to construct fortifications there.

ARTICLE 4 provides for action by the Council of the League of Nations. If the Council is satisfied that a breach of Articles 42 and 43 of the Versailles Treaty has been committed it will notify its finding to the Locarno Powers, "who severally agree that in such case they will each of them come immediately to the assistance of the Power against whom the act complained of is directed".

ON March 19th matters affecting all Europe hang in the balance. England, occupying the central and controlling position, has not yet spoken decisively. One must only attempt a temperate survey.

M. Herriot in a recent speech said that Great Britain, after a period of hesitancy, had so completely identified itself with the League as to have become the conscience of Europe. Since British statesmanship cannot move in advance of British opinion, the question which the plain man must ask himself is how British opinion reacts to Herr Hitler's dramatic move. Could a British government reply to it by measures which might lead to war? Those measures would necessarily consist in an imposition of economic and financial sanctions, and could only be carried out, consistently with present British policy, in concert with the League of Nations. The onus of recommending them to the League must lie upon Great Britain, as a Power less directly threatened by militarization of the Rhineland than France or Belgium, who at once demanded this. The British

public's first instinct was to ask itself whether the bold step which Hitler had taken was taken with hostile intent: whether it seriously increased the danger to France, to Belgium—and to England.

Nobody can deny that it brings danger nearer; for the suggestion of agreement to a corresponding demilitarized zone was derisory, as it would mean asking France to scrap the defensive works with which at vast cost her eastern frontier has been strengthened. But the German manifesto furnished two reassuring answers: the offer of a pact of non-aggression for twenty-five years; and a suggestion of willingness to rejoin the League of Nations. Both these appealed strongly to the British mind, and disposed it to see in Germany's reassertion of right, denied by threatened penalty, no more than an emphatic and final repudiation of "war guilt". Finally, the suggestion to separate the Covenant from the Treaty of Versailles found a considerable popularity in England, since England has come to consider the dictates of Versailles as having proceeded solely from France and been simply the expression of French unreasonableness.

Beyond this, visions were raised suggesting the possible curtailment of a huge financial burden, and the lessening of those apprehensions which have induced the British public and Parliament to undertake it. For the great, though unacknowledged, political change in the last two years is that England has grown apprehensive and is no longer inclined to scoff at the French. Collective security, which formerly was discussed with a detached philanthropic approval, is now very definitely recognized for what it is—a supreme British interest, to which Great Britain must make its full contribution. The real question for the British public is: Where does security lie?

Apprehensions are justified. The British Dominions lie far out of range, but Great Britain is now the most vulnerable of targets, and Germany the most formidable of possible enemies, as not only the experience of the last war shows, but day to day observation. She excels in the use of machinery, but her best machine is her thinking machine. The formidable and balanced product of thought with which the world was confronted on March 7th bore all the marks of highly organized collaboration—just as evidently as in the Italian history of the last eighteen

months we can see the presence of one masterful but impulsive mind. Yet both these Powers have advantages over England and over France in dictatorial control of their nations' resources. Italy and Germany pay for this by enormous sacrifice—sacrifice of personal well-being, for both are in financial stress and even short of some foods—but above all of personal freedom. France, like England, allows to every citizen some share of a voice in shaping policy: and however fractional that share, policy reflects the fluctuating mind of a community that is only now and then actuated by a common will. In France there is frequent change of the directing persons—at least of those nominally directing: policy stays a good deal in the hands of great civil servants. In England, where it is usual to laugh at French inconstancy, the same persons have remained in charge of government for several years, but the policy has changed out of recognition. Against two States so hampered by their freedom, Germany gains an overwhelming advantage by sacrificing freedom. But in one vital respect France is on a level with Germany: the military obligation is universal. Here England differs from the rest of Europe, except Denmark. The numbers of its population are not a source of strength but of weakness. "*Nos numerus sumus et fruges consumere nati*". Her citizens are all mouths and do not produce enough food to keep them fed. Their existence depends on the functioning of a complex machinery, which is defended by a body of men paid for the purpose; and it is not easy to keep this force at full strength. Further, if it came to war, the British Government could not give orders to the trade unions. That is somewhat different in France; totally different in Germany. If the conscience of England were strongly moved, as it was in 1914, trade unionists would act again as they did then. But it does not seem conceivable that the marching of German troops into German territory should have the same effect on English minds as the marching of them into Belgium. English statecraft must take account of working class feeling.

All this will have been present to the mind of English statesmen; and further they must be aware of every Englishman's disposition to count on the effect of friendly intercourse. England remembers that Soviet Russia, while kept at arm's length by

everyone was regarded as a general menace ; Soviet Russia in the League begins to be regarded as a principal guarantor of the League's principles. Unfortunately, Germany does not share this feeling : Germans either have, or profess to have, a real fear of Russia ; Sweden, a very different country, shares this fear ; and probably Sweden would feel much more secure with Germany in the League. The Scandinavian Powers are anything but negligible when we come to ask how the conscience of Europe responds, and Sweden's attitude to the German proposals will weigh with British statesmen who do not wish to force Scandinavia to choose between the League and Germany.

The ideal solution from the British standpoint would be one through which Great Britain, having induced the French to regard Germany's action as merely irregular and untactful, should then lead Germany back into the League and finally confer a supreme benefit on Europe by reconciling these two ancient enemies.

But the French say, " No " ; and a large section of the British public will therefore say that the French are impossible to work with. One extensively circulated paper instituted a plebiscite to ascertain whether its English readers prefer the Germans or the French, and reports that the Germans are the more sympathetic to England. That may be so. Italians are more acceptable personally than English people to the French (strange as the English may think it) ; but when Italy had become France's valued associate for mutual defence, France nevertheless, under strong pressure from England, took steps distasteful to Italy in order to maintain law and good faith within the League of Nations. France sees in Herr Hitler's action a violation of international law not less grave than Italy's. She did not refuse to discuss the new system which Germany proposed to substitute for that previously existing. She claimed simply that, since troops had been moved into the Rhineland, secretly and suddenly, against Germany's pledge voluntarily given and publicly renewed, these troops should be withdrawn before any discussion took place. She claimed that England should back her demand. Was this unreasonable ?

M. Sarraut has set out with perfect clearness that for France the essential concern is not protection of her frontier, but the

maintenance of law in Europe. His demand is simply that the right to lawless action shall be repudiated with all the authority of the League, and if necessary by action to make clear the consequence of lawlessness. Germany could move out her troops, as she moved them in, without altering in essence the military position. Nobody is going to invade the Rhineland. The only argument against this withdrawal is that Herr Hitler's prestige would suffer. But that prestige depends upon Herr Hitler's power and willingness to override all international obligations and his pledged word when it appears to him convenient. Is it proper that Europe should augment that prestige by bowing once more before the *fait accompli*? Facts have to be faced. Unless France and Belgium can count on support from the League when right is so patently on their side, the plain conclusion is that these countries will revert to the old system of alliances, pursuing solely a national and not an international end. The League will disappear because its members run away before the show of force.

If law is reasserted the proposals which Germany makes can be considered as a whole; and there is no doubt which way the influence of England would be thrown. On condition of Germany's entering into the engagements which Herr Hitler has proposed, and returning to the League, the Rhineland could certainly become a normal part of the Reich. But it is not a mere formality that the French insist on; it is an assertion of the necessity that negotiations shall be carried on as between peoples equally observing their compacts.

The Treaty of Locarno was made for mutual protection in the West of Europe. Behind the shelter of that Treaty Germany has built up armaments with great skill, at great sacrifices, and in disregard of the obligations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles. Now, having profited by the Treaty, she tears it up. Englishmen should ask themselves whether if Germany had been in France's place, Germany, fully armed, able to prevent the expansion of armament on her border, would have allowed it. The reason why France allowed it is that France, like England, has a real detestation of war. Germany profits by maintaining the will to war; France loses by a deeply ingrained pacifism, that will fight, but only if fighting is unavoidable. It is truer to say that

if nations are to be judged by military efficiency, France loses, as England loses, by the practice of freedom. Above all, by the freedom of teaching. In Germany no teaching is permitted which does not serve to promote military efficiency. In France, it is notorious that a very large proportion of the State-paid teachers are pacifist in their instruction, even to a point that goes beyond loyalty to the State.

What England is asked to do by Germany, and by those who advocate bowing to the *fait accompli*, is to countersign an advantage seized in defiance of a compact to which England was a party, at the expense of England's closest allies in the War. She is further asked to accept the privilege of leading the law-breaking State into a League whose purpose is to substitute law for force as between nation and nation. Germany will say that German honour is committed to maintaining Germany's action. England also has her honour to consider. Loyalty to her allies is indeed safeguarded by the pledge that an attack on Belgium or on France will be treated as an attack on England. But loyalty to the League ? Would the League gain by condoning a flagrant breach of public faith ? Would the League be stronger by welcoming back the pledge breaker ?

Against the course demanded by France it is argued, not that economic sanctions will be inefficient, but that they will ruin Germany and so inflict loss on all Europe. England is warned to count the cost. Germany in pursuing her own conception of justice by her own methods has already accepted great sacrifices and faces great risks. France and Belgium are willing to face risks. They count on England's support. England certainly must consider her own interest. That lies further ahead. If Germany emerges triumphant from the crisis of her own creating, she can at her chosen moment raise the question of her former oversea possessions. East and West Africa are less dangerous, but South-West Africa and New Guinea may be wedges to break up the British Empire ; and the Power that has taken all risks will play for the highest stakes. Between the disputant who is ready for sacrifices and the one who will not accept them, there can be no doubt which will prevail.

Mr. Baldwin has his back to the wall. Those who know him best say that only then he becomes formidable. His choice of

Sir Thomas Inskip as Minister to co-ordinate armaments has been construed as a sign of irresolution. It has certainly not the obvious significance that would have attached to the appointment of Mr. Churchill, whose intervention in debate, like that of Mr. Lloyd George, reminded the House what powerful abilities remain unutilised. But Mr. Lloyd George out of his commanding experience stressed the impossibility that Germany should want war now. The conclusion is that Herr Hitler gambles on the unwillingness of other States to face war. He may have counted too far on Mr. Baldwin's reluctance in the last resort to lead. Faced with a firm lead from Great Britain, having such backing as is behind it, the German General Staff would scarcely allow their country to face the odds which Mr. Lloyd George counted up arrayed against them.

ANALYSIS OF AMERICAN RECOVERY

By André Siegfried

DURING the past few months a definite improvement has been apparent in business conditions in the United States. No doubt this improvement originated partly in a policy which is systematically spendthrift, as is clearly manifest in the unbalanced Budget.

The deficit which has been accumulating during the past four years has now reached 13,000 million dollars. Nor is it likely to disappear, judging by the colossal expenditures which have been set on foot, sanctioned, or suggested on every side. The agricultural policy of the A.A.A.—of which the future is now very uncertain—placed a great deal more money in the hands of the farmers in the form of innumerable cheques. Also, the Government's policy of public works, which has increased steadily in volume, is disseminating subsidies, salaries, and profits on every side. Congress has invested in one man, the President, an unprecedented power which enables him to spend as he sees fit the astronomical sum of 4,800 million dollars, a sum so enormous that the imagination can scarcely grasp its significance, and even the Government itself is finding a difficulty in using it.

One gathers the impression that the Government is doing its utmost to make use of these vast sums, but its efforts are not always successful. Anyone who asks for funds—no matter who and no matter what for—can count on a favourable reception, especially if he happens to be a political supporter. At the moment the most useless and amazing pieces of work are liable to be undertaken. Under such conditions the amount of money in circulation is very great, and owing to its repercussions on purchases and sales, is contributing in part—perhaps an important part—to the creation of the present economic activity. Without doubt it is the political factor that is bringing about

the economic recovery, owing to the Government's policy of intervention.

Strangely enough, the platform of the Democratic Party in 1932 included balancing the Budget and cutting down expenses—in short a retrenchment worthy of Gladstone. Nevertheless, President Roosevelt's policy has been characterized, more than by any of his other activities, by this flood of credits, subsidies, premiums, indemnities, relief, and economic stimulants of every kind.

This is the most popular part of his programme. When the Supreme Court condemned the immense edifice of laws, decrees, and codes, known as the N.R.A., the people accepted it without batting an eyelid. Similarly there was no vehement protest when this same Court repudiated the A.A.A., but it would probably be with very bad grace that they would consent to abandon a financial policy which consists of spending without stint. The Government in these circumstances, and especially on the eve of the Presidential election, finds itself more or less obliged to leave all taps turned on. Even if it does take fright over the financial uproar it has created, the Senate and House of Representatives will not be actuated by the same scruples, for the conviction of the electors, yesterday, today, and tomorrow, is that America is a land of " unlimited possibilities ", and there is no bottom to the United States treasury.

In order to procure the fabulous sums which they are forcing upon the economic organism in monster doses of one, two or three billion dollars at a time, the State has resorted almost entirely to borrowing. The Budget is not balanced and is not likely to be, for it is out of the question to raise by taxation the vast sums required by such a programme. It is the same in a war when one makes use of every possible resource, and promises that all will be put right later when the crisis is over.

In the present case, however, what most puzzles a visitor is the extraordinary facility with which the State finds all the money it needs. Its loans are raised so easily that they pass unnoticed. The Government has not had to go to the public but only to the banks, and owing to the abundance of deposits the rate of interest remains extremely low : less than a fourth

of 1 per cent. for short term loans, 1½ to 1⅝ for medium, and under 3 per cent. for long term loans.

In Europe common sense tells us that distrust followed by panic should be the natural and inevitable effect of a policy which laughs at unbalanced budgets. Actually the experience of the past few months has proved that the Government's ability to borrow is far from exhausted. In spite of the increase in public debt from 19½ billion dollars in 1932 to 30 billions today, and the likelihood of its reaching 35 billions tomorrow, America, in contrast to Europe, is still able to preserve a margin of security so considerable that it is generally felt that there is no cause for alarm.

A European critic need only spend a few months in the atmosphere of the New World to lose in his turn all sense of proportion. He becomes American, which means that he believes that what would be fatal in the Old World is not necessarily so in the New. The health of a man of sixty requires care and prudence which are unnecessary for a young fellow of twenty-five. This brings us to a conclusion which is the reverse of Thiers' famous formula that America has not yet reached the point where there are no mistakes left to make.

American impunity, revealed once again, always seems to us to have a tinge of immorality about it when viewed from the standpoint of economic sanity. The most serious thing is that the people are quite aware of what is going on. In perfectly good faith they believe that their country can go to any lengths, indulge in any panacea, any folly, any fantasy. In a sudden revelation at the worst moment of the crisis they were faced with a fact to which they had been oblivious, that like the rest of the world they too were mortal. But here they are, forgetting it already. America will be America, to the very end!

Let us try to analyse what is taking place as a result of this policy of planned and chronic disequilibrium. When the Government borrows, a credit is opened in a bank, without reference to the thrift of the savings depositor, and on the basis of this credit the State by means of cheques freely distributes money to its beneficiaries. These innumerable beneficiaries spend the money, which eventually returns to the bank in the form of steadily increasing deposits.

This forces us to conclude that the recovery, in so far as it results from the Government's financial policy, is artificial. It can last only while the rhythm of State expenditure is maintained, which will be only so long as it is easy, or simply possible, to borrow. For the moment this fear of not being able to borrow is hardly felt. Nevertheless one can foresee that the needs of the Treasury, far from diminishing, will move in the opposite direction and increase steadily up to the Presidential election. Congress has just voted the Soldiers' Bonus, which will cost two billion dollars; and who can say that the Townsend Plan—a pension of 200 dollars a month to every one "over sixty years of age"—will not be adopted as the result of the pressure of an astonishingly well organized agitation? If this comes to pass, the number of billions which will have to be spent passes the bounds of imagination!

A few wiseheads do occasionally tremble a little when they think about these possibilities which, although they seem to belong to the realm of fancy, may one day or another take shape as realities. The State is borrowing mainly for short periods, no doubt because neither the banks nor the public are anxious to let out their capital on long terms. So suspicion really does exist, though not overtly expressed and coinciding curiously enough with a renewal of confidence. This confidence is in the destiny of the country, however, and not in the Government, for the Americans have few illusions on the latter score. There seems to be a battle—a race if you will—between the amount of wealth available and the absurdities that it must neutralize and absorb.

If the day does come when the Government is confronted with the impossibility of borrowing further the consequences will be terrible, since the whole banking system has become inextricably involved with the credit of the State. The Americans are not worrying about such an eventuality, and much more water will run under the bridges before they realize it is possible. Meanwhile President Roosevelt follows the advice of Nietzsche, and goes on living dangerously.

So much for the first aspect of the situation. There is another, however, more important perhaps and in any case much healthier, which certainly justifies optimism. The State is

borrowing and spending dollars by the billion, apparently without even taking the trouble to count them. But these sums, colossal as they seem, are a mere bagatelle in comparison with the enormous mass of deposits lying idle in the banks. These deposits are accumulating furtively, as people dare not invest in industrial securities. When the time does come to release them, they will give a magnificent impetus to recovery. It is not an artificial stimulant that is required to thaw them, but the return of normal healthy conditions. Thus it should suffice to leave Nature to do her work, and wait for the economic structure to be borne up on the rising tide. Now it seems that the turning of the tide is not far off. This phenomenon is independent of politics. Its alternating rhythm is a natural law which extends into economics, and indeed is apparent in every aspect of life.

For on the North American continent the depression seems to have spent its force, and consequently the needs which have been accumulating without being satisfied will assert themselves. During the past five years construction has been slowed down, even completely stopped at times, while industrial equipment has been sparingly maintained and rarely developed or renewed. The United States may be over-equipped, but had there been a recovery, even a slight one, it would have had to renew a considerable part of its machinery.

Into what channels of consumption are the budgetary distributions of the State actually finding their way ? Less it would seem towards the heavy industries—the production of machinery —than into those catering for daily wants. The unemployed and the farmers who are receiving indemnities do not buy machinery. They pay for a motor car, a radio set, or household utensils. The more prudent use some of these windfalls to pay off their debts. So, in a general way, it is not the heavy industries which are benefiting, for in the recovery which has taken place so far they have lagged behind. Those which profit from this financial irrigation are of another type.

According to the National City Bank, certain industries are more active at the moment than they have been at any time since 1929, while others are today more prosperous than ever before. This is shown in the following table, showing volume

of business, which appeared in the bank's Bulletin for January, 1936 :

Highest since 1929.	*All-time High Records*
Machine tool orders.	Electric power.
Automobiles.	Rayon.
Vacuum cleaners.	Wool consumption.
Mail order sales.	Shoes.
Petroleum products.	Washing machines.
Hosiery production.	Oil burners.
	Electric refrigerators.
	Air conditioning equipment.
	Petrol.
	Plate glass.
	Air transport.
	Cigarettes.
	Mechanical stokers.
	Nickel.
	Electric lamps.
	Radios.

This is interesting, as it shows that the State can put money into circulation, but cannot direct it exactly to the points where it is most needed. According to the most competent experts, recovery in the United States will be neither serious nor lasting until the heavy industries, those which supply capital goods, regain their former activity.

What is needed to bring this about ? In the first place the idle bank deposits must be invested in industries which are now vegetating, but this obviously will not take place until there is some hope of profit. Such a profit is hardly probable unless production costs can be brought low enough to stimulate consumption, thus giving back to the masses the purchasing power which they have lost. As a matter of fact the Government's policy of intervention in industry is working in the opposite direction by maintaining prices at a high level.

This explains why the condemnation of the N.R.A., far from proving to be a discouraging factor in the business world, actually provoked a return of confidence. After this verdict early last summer, manufacturers and business men—in other words the social classes contributing directly to recovery—were able to say, and did say, that they still looked upon the Constitution as a guarantee, and that liberty of contract and free competition were still the basis of the American economic

system. This optimism—in any case purely negative—is offset by the fear of a new period of reform and intervention. Thus the uncertainty attached, not only to the result of the next presidential election but even to the President's intentions should he be re-elected, still remains a serious obstacle to recovery.

It is possible, however, that political vicissitudes may in the last analysis prove to be less important than the natural movement of economic seasons or tides. The tide now appears to be turning, if it has not already turned. There is nothing unreasonable in this. Since 1932 the price level has not declined further, and a marked rise in gold production is discernible. These and other such symptoms are more influential than the policy of any American president, even when he is called Roosevelt. This evidently is what they think in Wall Street, where they would like nothing better than to set off on another boom exactly like its brother booms of the past.

America soon forgets. During the depression she forgot what it was like to be prosperous, and with the re-birth of prosperity she will forget still more quickly the lessons of the depression.

There are two trends of recovery, both developing at the same time but differing in character. The first is the result of a policy, the second of a rising economic tide which has been neither provoked nor hastened by this policy. At present these two types coincide, mutually supporting each other as they advance shoulder to shoulder in parallel directions. The Government's expenditures act as a starter to put the motor in motion, but it is still necessary for it to contain enough petrol to keep running. One does not drive a car on the starter alone, but this is what the President would be trying to do if he endeavoured to bring about a recovery, and then maintain it without the conditions of normal lasting prosperity being fulfilled.

What are the healthy conditions that will carry industrial recovery into the future and then maintain it? Do the Americans always accept the principles which were proclaimed over and over again before the depression as the basis of their economic system? Has the crisis taught them anything new? Along what lines are they now working? It is not easy to reply, for there are many tendencies, often divergent and varying with the different industries.

During the 25 or 30 years preceding the War, the policy of the trusts was to lower the cost of production, this being regarded as the most definite advantage of amalgamation. At the same time, however, they sought by arbitrary intervention to maintain a high level of selling prices, in order to increase their profits at the expense of the consumer. In short, they practised a policy of restriction based upon coalition. The Sherman Act certainly made combines and monopolies illegal, but Big Business discovered how to get round the law and use it for its own ends. Thus, although public opinion was decidedly hostile to trusts, they remained powerful. It is not certain, however, that they were serving their best interests in pursuing this course, for had they lowered their selling price instead of consolidating it, they would have stimulated consumption. What these great industries, with their wonderful prospect of expansion, required above all was an enormous market.

The axiom that mass production must cater for the masses was discovered by Ford after the War—indeed by the whole motor-car industry. Ford's policy, which one cannot praise too highly for its daring, its vision and simple wisdom, had to be completely different. He reduced the cost of production by increasing its volume—like the trusts—but he allowed the public to profit by the reduction by doggedly and systematically diminishing his sale price. At the same time he increased wages to a maximum compatible with his output, or at least maintained them even during a depression, in order to raise the standard of living of the masses, and therefore the purchasing power of the country. Although American industry pays high wages they do not weigh heavily on costs, for its organization, mechanization, and the standardization of its mass production, result in complete efficiency on the part of the workers. In no other country in the world is labour so well paid as in the United States, and yet motor-cars are cheaper there than anywhere else, so almost everyone is able to buy a car. Ford has taught us that industry should try to increase the purchasing power of the people by offering low prices, and that the more prices decline the more the public can buy.

American industry seemed to have adopted this theory in the marvellous years of prosperity that followed the War. But,

now that time has passed and we can look back, it is apparent that its leaders were not courageous enough. They usually tried to speed up sales without lowering prices sufficiently, and as a result consumption was behindhand. They then had to resort to stimulants—the economic equivalent of an injection of cacodylate, which puts life into tired people. The best known of these stimulants is the system of hire purchase which discounts future revenue ; another lies in the systematic application of publicity ; another in better organized distribution, which goes in search of the customer, tracking him into his home, sparing him all effort and making it harder for him to refuse than to buy. Such methods are expensive, for they require a large staff and finally add to the cost of production.

At the height of the boom in 1927 and 1928, one observed that the cost of actual manufacture was declining steadily owing to constant technical progress, but that the cost of distribution was increasing in like proportion. In the end it weighed down overhead expenses, and therefore slowed down consumption instead of stimulating it.

When the depression started and then assumed catastrophic proportions, two methods were available to combat it : the policy of the trusts and the policy of Ford. In his New Deal President Roosevelt decided to adopt the former, after having recommended and practised severe deflation in his electoral campaign and in his first measures after coming into power. The business world, demoralized and gasping, was at his mercy, ready to accept and even be thankful for any measure that the saviour might choose to adopt.

Instead of looking for a solution in the reduction of costs and prices, the N.R.A. on the contrary advised consolidating them. Far from discouraging industrial agreements which hitherto had been proscribed, his policy encouraged combines by virtually suspending the Sherman Act. Industrialists thus obtained what they had vainly sought for forty years : the right to come to terms and control prices by methods of restriction. But they were invited to pay the price of this tolerance by allowing the Government to impose its social policy, consisting of recognition of trade unions, limitation of working hours, wage control, etc. The old spirit of the trusts reappeared, in youthful form

and stamped with " corporatism " on the Italian model and a vague imprint of Marxism. The consumer bore the weight of this combination, in which the workmen and the industrialists were to share the profit, while the State installed itself in the role—new to it in America—of mediator and arbitrator.

Was this really beneficial to those interested ? Would it not have been more effective to continue to aim persistently at lowering costs, which would in turn have lowered selling prices and revived consumption ? Now that the N.R.A. has ceased to exist, and the judgment of the Supreme Court has freed production from this ill-considered government control, the question has to be dealt with afresh, for industry can continue to do voluntarily what the Government by its codes undertook to impose on it. The response varies in the different industries. Some of them, such as iron and steel, seem to be wedded to the conception of fixed prices, guaranteed by combines and tariff protection. The motor-car industry, on the other hand, remains true to the methods of Ford and is getting on well. Others again, such as cotton textiles and coal, are struggling with competitive rivalry leading to unhealthy price-cutting, which does not leave sufficient profit on the capital invested.

At heart the industrialists hope to see the Sherman Act repealed so that they can be free to combine, and at the same time throw overboard Roosevelt's social legislation. It is hardly probable that they will obtain such advantages, unless in the precarious form of illegal " hoodwinking ". They are not unanimous in their views, but it seems to me that Ford represents the true, the traditional American spirit of initiative, courage, and readiness to take risks.

When an industry in the United States tries to reduce costs, what does it do ? Its first efforts are not concerned with wages, but rather to increase output in order to diminish the weight of overhead expenses. Meanwhile it is systematically replacing workmen by machinery in order to obtain, without asking a sacrifice from the remainder of the staff, the equivalent of a decline in wages. A solution is thus sought in organization instead of in economy. Where American industry differs chiefly from European is that its social organism, rather than its policy, is instinctively opposed to reducing wages. The manager

must find some other way, and if he does not he is disqualified in competition.

America thus has a choice of two methods of overcoming the depression, one orthodox and the other involving the use of stimulants. What does the public think, especially the electors on whose sovereign vote will depend the final reckoning?

If the crisis gives rise to any movements of protest, either social or political, they will be the outcome of "populism", a tradition entirely different from that of Europe, and one which turns by instinct to the demagogy of inflation. To this tradition we must attribute the recent tendencies which aim at social reform, by reorganizing distribution and artificially increasing the purchasing power of the individual. In this connection it is rather curious to find a certain religious sentiment closely and inextricably bound up both with the policy and the economic remedies, especially as one goes farther West, where the resentment felt against the depression develops an apostolic character. Whenever a leader apostle is defeated, he is quickly raised to the rank of martyr, in an atmosphere of passion and fanaticism which reminds me of the heroic days of the Dreyfus case in France.

In the category of economic contagions must be classed the Social Credit movement which surged irresistibly over the Canadian province of Alberta last summer, carrying its leader, Mr. Aberhart, almost unanimously to the post of Prime Minister. In this same class must also be put the Townsend Plan which —truth still being stranger than fiction—may yet be voted by Congress. Although these two movements have no apparent relation to each other, both belong to the New World, both to the West, the latter originating in California and the former having been given a chance in Canada. They are thus spontaneous products of the countryside, as we must bear in mind if we wish to understand such contagions and the atmosphere in which they flourish. Townsend Clubs have been set up everywhere—not for discussion but to agitate; to stir up the electors to get the system passed through Congress.

When Prohibition came to an end, many trained Anti-Saloon League agents were thrown out of work, men of experience who were past masters in the art of intimidating the electors in order to force them to vote a certain way. Their services being

available, we are told, they agreed to work for this new cause. The members of the House of Representatives are being asked to say without beating about the bush, whether they will promise to vote for the Townsend Plan. If not, apart from all considerations of party politics, they will lose the Townsend supporters at the next election. So who can say that Congress will not vote in favour of giving $200 a month to " everyone over sixty " ?

In 1933, when America was floundering about in the depression, demoralized, terrified, and without hope, it turned to President Roosevelt, who was able to restore the confidence it had lost. At the same time even the commercial world, in a fluster, accepted him as leader. Now that the tide is tending to rise again, the one thing that industry wants is to be rid of government intervention, and to be free once more to direct its convalescence in its own way. Its present attitude towards the Administration is one of hostility, which it no longer even tries to conceal.

Its adversaries say that it has learned nothing, and from the point of view of social service this may be true, as America is at least forty years behind Europe. The chances are that the policy of *laisser faire* will be abandoned, as the general public is thinking on other lines. Big Business has little idea how unpopular it is when it discusses its affairs in terms of common sense and profits, while the masses are speaking the language of humanity, of sentiment and relief.

While prosperity is being born anew like the spring, the politicians are trying to coax it back by their policy of demagogic spending. This would prove less efficacious in increasing employment and speeding up sales than a programme of official *abstention*, and in the end might be fatal alike to the credit of the state and the stability of the currency. Once again the opposition have good reason to declare that nothing can teach the demagogues a lesson.

A stage in the depression has now been reached when the cure is worse than the disease.

(Translated by Doris Hemming from an article in the " Revue des Deux Mondes " of March 1st.)

A VICTORIAN GRANDE DAME

By Ethel Smyth

IT must have been in the middle 'eighties that I first set eyes on Lady Ponsonby. I had accompanied some foreign ladies who were staying with the Empress Eugénie at Farnborough Hill to a minor military function at Aldershot—sports, I fancy—and one of the Princesses was giving away the prizes. Madame Arcos, a sort of unofficial lady-in-waiting to the Empress, who was shepherding the Farnborough Hill contingent, after presenting her homages to the Princess exchanged a few words with a short, striking looking woman evidently in attendance on Her Royal Highness. So instantly did she arrest my attention that I asked who she was. " Oh, that's Lady Ponsonby—wife of the Queen's private secretary", said Madame Arcos ; and another woman, reputed to be in the know as to Court gossip, volunteered, " a very clever woman—said to be the only person the Queen is afraid of " ; or it may have been " the only person she is afraid of is the Queen". In after years I related this incident to Lady Ponsonby, adding that my informant had a relation who was something or other at the Court. " Probably one of the footmen ", said Lady Ponsonby, and indeed, whichever way it was, a sillier statement cannot be imagined. The Queen can never have been afraid of anyone, unless perhaps of him who had mastered her by love. As for Lady Ponsonby, capable in matters of feeling of sounding deeper depths than most people, her sentiment for the Queen was certainly one of the major emotions of her life. But to use the word " fear " in connection with that dauntless spirit sounds as fantastic as it would in the case of Richard Cœur de Lion or Queen Elizabeth.

Then came the years when I was so much at the Deanery at Windsor, and gathering on all sides that Lady Ponsonby

was, in truth, a remarkable woman, of course I longed to meet her. One day—I think it must have been in 1890—her two daughters, Betty and Maggie, came to tea ; and shortly afterwards, on the " cutlet for cutlet " principle, Edith Davidson and I were duly bidden to Norman Tower, the official residence of the Queen's private secretary, and at last I found myself in the presence of the lady of the house.

But not for long. Afternoon tea was a ceremony that bored her, and what she had heard so far of Edith Davidson's friend, Ethel Smyth, had not inspired her with a wish to make my acquaintance. On the contrary ! True, Sir Walter Parratt, the beloved organist of St. George's Chapel, had specially praised my counterpoint, and as the Ponsonbys were musical this should have told in my favour. But Lady Ponsonby was also aware of my passion for hunting, and declared that a contrapuntist *doublé* with Fred Archer, as she put it, sounded very tiresome. As soon, therefore, as politeness allowed she pleaded urgent letters and vanished.

In my youth I sang a great deal, and Edith now suggested I should sing my own edition of the beautiful Irish melody, " Come o'er the sea ", to the girls. No sooner was it over than Betty jumped up saying, " Mama *must* hear that ", ran out of the room, and presently came back with her reluctant and deeply sceptical mother. The song was repeated, and after that there were no further difficulties ; in fact, it became my habit to bribe her with music and then settle down to the interminable talks that were to be my joy for the next twenty-six years.

My very first encounter with her brought me one of the sharp joys that, so far, the rough file of piled-up years has been powerless to blunt—the strange, half physical pleasure a beautiful speaking voice can still induce, and if this looks like extravagance of sensation, it is an extravagance permissible in a musician. In Lady Ponsonby's case the effect was heightened by a clean-cut enunciation slightly tinged with a soft Northumbrian burr, no doubt a feminine edition of the same thing in Harry Hotspur's speech, and, as in his case, the charm lay perhaps in the fact that it was so emphatically herself. I never knew what my Christian name could sound like till she came to use it.

The next visit provided another vivid impression. She was seated at her writing table, the appliances of which were as carefully thought out as a conjurer's stock-in-trade, and anything with steel, silver, or brass about it had a burnish one came to associate with her mental operations. But what specially struck me was the way her small, extremely strong hands tackled ordinary little tasks, such as sharpening a pencil, sealing a letter, adjusting a lamp, finding her place in a book—rapid, delicate, accurate movements as of a world in which fumbling is unknown. Later on I grasped the fascination these things had for me; it was the suggestion of force combined with restraint—the swift, controlled energy of the violent. Once I said to her: "there's nothing exciting about picking up a pin with an old pair of scissors. But suppose some huge hammer, capable of squashing a Great Northern engine as flat as a flounder, and furnished with tiny claws at the end, were to descend rapidly, noiselessly, and pick up that pin, wouldn't it thrill you"? And though told not to talk nonsense I think the idea pleased her, for she was rather proud of her muscular strength, and only a couple of years before her death made me feel her biceps, remarking "not bad for eighty-two".

I think I did not see her again till I was at Cap Martin with the Empress Eugénie in April, 1891, when she and the girls who were at Mentone came to lunch and I used to go over there. In Mentone I acquired a new feather for my cap inasmuch as I persuaded Lady Ponsonby against her will to read Anatole France. She was a great authority on French literature of a certain kind, St. Simon, Pascal, Brunetière, Jules Lemaître, and so on, and had no reason whatever for confidence in my literary judgment. Finally, after I had threatened to train a parrot to say "Anatole France" and send it to Windsor—the Empress adding "*vous savez elle en est capable*"—she consented to accept the loan of my *Thaïs*, and from that moment the author became a standing dish in her menu. In after years, admitting that she liked undefeatedness, she once said: "The first symptom of it I noticed in you was the way you bullied me into reading Anatole France".

After that we must have met occasionally, for in a letter to my brother I find mention of a "wonderful new friend of mine,

stepped straight out of the Eighteenth Century". But this was true in a limited sense only, for in essential matters, as beseemed the granddaughter of Earl Grey, she was a modern woman. When Girton College was started in the early 'sixties, Mrs. Ponsonby, then a young married woman, was, together with Miss Emily Davies, one of the hardest workers on the original committee. And ten years later when the first Trade Union for women came into existence, no member of the board was more indefatigable than she. Like other young women she was fond of riding, skating, dancing, and society, but she seems always to have gravitated towards people who had serious interests in life. Indeed, such was her respect for intellectual achievement, that when presented to George Eliot, before she realised what was happening, she suddenly found herself in the midst of one of the profound curtseys she reserved exclusively for the Queen.

Never was a woman of more catholic tastes. From the first she had been devoted to music and painting, and like all Bulteels, took her own line in all things. She told me that she fancied the Queen had selected her as Maid of Honour not because she was the niece of her private secretary, General Grey, but partly because she had the reputation of being a first-rate actress, and chiefly because she was of a different type from the generality of courtiers. None the less, when Sir Henry, who had been equerry to the Prince Consort, succeeded General Grey, according to Lady Ponsonby it took his Sovereign Lady ten years to understand that the former Maid of Honour had no ambition to pull strings. Shrewd though the Queen was, I suppose no potentate can be expected to assume complete indifference to intrigue in the wife of one so near the throne as the royal private secretary—particularly if that wife is a woman of brilliant intellect and strong personality.

Casting my thoughts back across the prelude period of our relation I recall one intensely comic episode that took place in the Spring of 1892.

When the Queen was away her opera and concert tickets were often put at Lady Ponsonby's disposal, and on one of these occasions she asked me to dine and go with her to hear the Joachim Quartet. She rather liked being thus franked by her

Royal Mistress, and sailed into St. James's Hall cursorily displaying the Royal pasteboard to an awed policeman. At the door of the Concert Hall an exceedingly dirty attendant, much bewildered, began spitting on his fingers and fumbling with the cards, till Lady Ponsonby's peremptory " Don't do that, man ! " so alarmed him that he hastily pushed them back into my hands and ushered us into the front row of—a Christy Minstrel entertainment !

Lady Ponsonby had mistaken the date, and the Christy Minstrels, whom repairs had driven from their downstairs haunts, had been permitted for the time being to perform in the Hall sacred to highbrow music and political speaking. I did not know her well enough to give way utterly to laughter, than which nothing would have gone worse with her evident fury as she whirled round and left the premises. It can rarely have happened to her to find herself in a ridiculous position, and I doubt if she was in the slightest degree amused.

That summer I was held down by pressing work, and though I did not know it at the time, a terrible anxiety hung over my new friend. Lord Revelstoke, head of Baring's Bank, was Lady Ponsonby's brother-in-law, and ever since 1890, when the bank failed, the health of her specially loved sister, Lady Revelstoke, had also been failing. In October she died. Not long afterwards when I was lunching at St. James's, Lady Ponsonby made a brief allusion to her sister's death, and then, in the inflection of her voice, the look on her face—it was but a flash and quickly veiled—I surmised one secret of the hold she had on all who came within her orbit—her power of deep passionate love. Lady Ponsonby's equipment included many other qualities it is easy to catalogue—intelligence, culture, sense of humour, courage, inflexible rectitude, sense of duty, and a religious instinct which I once pleased her by defining as a blend of paganism and Christian mysticism. But in no human being I have ever met were hidden such inexhaustible stores of fire as in the heart of this apparently calm, deliberately reserved, rather sphinx-like being, who possessed among other peculiarities the art of settling down with her book or newspaper in her armchair, or in a railway carriage—quiet as the hills and as though established there for all eternity.

A chief peculiarity of her diction was a habit that might have been irritating in anyone else, of interlarding it with French phrases to such an extent that one never heard her use the English equivalents of *hochements de tête*, *l'infiniment petit*, *injures*, *mesquineries*, *inepties*, *à tête reposée*, and dozens of similar words. And a thing she never could get over was that the fluent French speaker I think I can claim to have been in those days should be so hopelessly inaccurate in her genders ; " and you a musician, too ! " I once asked her nephew Maurice Baring how they felt towards her when they were children, and after reflection he replied : " Well, we felt it would never do to get our *genres* wrong in Aunt M'aimée's presence ".

This accuracy expressed itself in the extreme daintiness of her person, a point of coquetry which she considered obligatory in the old. Not that she appeared to take much interest in the actual cut of her clothes, in fact I suspect that many women of her age and epoch whom no one could accuse of over-fussiness in such matters gave them more thought in a month than she did in a year. And though I never saw her " trying on ", I feel convinced that, patient up to a certain point, the moment would come for a decided " thank you, that will do ", after which, let the fitter plead as she might, no further pullings and pinchings and pokings would have been submitted to.

But when she sallied forth to dine with the Queen or to attend some function it would not quite do to disregard, I loved to see her for once in a way in a handsome gown, wearing her ribbons and orders and all the rest of it. *Cela ne gâte rien*, as the Empress's old *Dame d'Honneur*, Madame le Breton, used to say when urging me to put my hat on straight, and even the most precious stones (I am alluding not to myself, but to Lady Ponsonby) look none the worse for a fine setting.

I often think of the careful ritual that determined the later stages of Lady Ponsonby's toilet. I can see her now, ensconced at her dressing table, static as though sitting for a portrait by some French painter (he would have to be French) called " La Toilette de Madame . . . " And when the hair brushing and cap adjusting were finished to her satisfaction, her maid would pin round her neck a very fine towel, holding up its lower edge while her mistress, with rapid unerring aim, would trim

her nails. Then the four corners were gathered together and the splinters carefully shaken into the fire, or, if there was none, still more carefully carried out of the room ; after which Lady Ponsonby was ready for the labours of the day.

* * *

" Lady Ponsonby was alarmingly *clever*, wasn't she " ? someone asked the other day—a question that induced reflections on a subject no two people agree about ; what the word " clever " means. Excellent judges like two great friends of hers, Arthur Benson and Edmund Gosse, would certainly have called her one of the " cleverest " women of their acquaintance, and so would many other people. Yet to my mind it was more a case of the highest degree of intelligence, including a rapid, far-reaching grasp of any subject she cared to consider, an intuitive perception of the other person's point of view—" the spirit of Monsieur le Comte de Juste Milieu ", as she used to call it—and the mental habit of always taking a beeline to the essential. If all this means cleverness, then that is the right word for her, but to me it suggests brains of various other types, and not exactly hers ; people like Aldous Huxley, Bertrand Russell, George Eliot, Rebecca West, Mrs. Benson, Vernon Lee, or G. Bernard Shaw, for instance.

* * *

I spoke of the fire that underlay everything and come now to the quality in her I chiefly delighted in: the extreme violence of her temperament. But let me preface by saying that what must have struck the ordinary observer most strongly of all will have been a serenity it would seem impossible to ruffle.

In my opinion the two things, violence and serenity, are absolutely compatible. Each has its hour. But violence is not one of the traits that figure in epitaphs or even in obituary notices ; and perhaps it is this discretion, this delicacy, this training of an unreal roseate light on the departed that makes all epitaphs and the majority of obituary notices such unsatisfactory reading. No one is more acutely aware of the inadequacy of this little tribute to Lady Ponsonby than its writer, but that particular defect it shall not have ; so without further ado I once more turn to what I have always looked upon

as one of the most attractive, the most lovable symptoms of intense vitality.

There was a housekeeper at St. James's, a most efficient woman with a temper so fierce that the mildest request on the part of one of the Ponsonby sons—for instance, that the kitchen maid be told not to boil the eggs hard—often resulted, so one of them told me, in a scene which left him pale and shattered for the rest of the day. But here his mother was in an element that had no terrors for her. Swiftly descending to the housekeeper's room she would shortly reappear, radiant, triumphant, rejuvenated: "I don't think", she would say, "there'll be any more trouble with Mrs. X. yet awhile".

I remember her telling me at Gilmuire of a heated dispute with the old gentleman who owned the property next to theirs, how in the night he had clambered over the fence and staked out a yard or so on her side of the ditch, declaring that this was the true boundary; how she had marched down with the man-servant, commanding him to pull up the stakes, and how, while this was proceeding, the old gentleman suddenly appeared on the bank and bade the man stop at once or he would have the law of him. Whereupon Lady Ponsonby not only ordered him to go on, but began pulling up the stakes herself (I have said she was very muscular) and flinging them back over the bank on which the old gentleman was still vociferating. "You can't do anything to me", she told him. "I have no vote and am not a citizen so don't come within the operation of the law. But let me tell you" (here a vigorous pull at a stake) "I intend to stick to my rights all the same. And as for you" (whizz, bang went the stake—but *not* aimed at the enemy !), "how dare you come skulking over the fence at dead of night, trespassing on my property?" And stake after stake flew over the fence while W—— murmured nervously: "Oh my lady, you'll hurt yourself".

Another time it was the police she defied. That part of South Ascot was then in the making, and the roads were mere heather tracks—all holes and ruts. One evening a message arrived that the Queen intended coming next day to see dear Mary's new house. The gardener and the boy were despatched first thing with shovels and barrows to an adjacent communal gravel

pit to dig wherewithal to mend the road, but ere long back they came in perturbation having been told by a policeman that they would be summoned for stealing. Gathering them under her wing Lady Ponsonby marched them and their barrows straight back to the pit, and meeting the policeman on the way informed him that she did not choose that the life of the Queen of England should be endangered because the Ascot Urban Authorities neglected their duties. Let them summon her if they liked, but she intended to take as much gravel as suited her purpose. No more was heard of the incident, but as far as I remember nothing much was done to improve that road during her lifetime.

* * *

Speaking for myself, though she was dearer to me than anyone in the world except one, never in my life, except perhaps with my mother, have I had such elemental rows with anyone as with Lady Ponsonby, particularly during the first year or two of our friendship. Accustomed to being considered rather violent myself, it always seemed to me that compared with her I was milder than milk and water, but this may have been a delusion. Also one readily allows that a person of violent temperament stirs in another fires that as a rule slumber peacefully beneath the crust superimposed by years and philosophy. All I know is, that when angry—with me at least—she would literally say anything: I mean really outrageous things, such as accusing me of taking and losing her favourite penknife (for twopence it would have been her purse !) and being afraid to confess ! Finally, having goaded me to madness, she would say in icy tones : " Pray don't let us have the *scène aux cheveux* about a piece of cutlery." (*Scène aux cheveux* was an expression applied by someone to the moment in melodrama where the heroine, betrayed by her lover, lets down her back hair.)

After the break up of my old home I took a cottage at Frimley, about seven miles from Gilmuire, and often used to bike over and stay the night, while Maggie, rightly judging that " two's company and three's none ", would dine with their neighbour, the Ranee of Sarawak. One night after dinner in the midst of some extra-fierce argument, a remark of hers so enraged me that I jumped up, ran into the porch and began

lighting my bicycle lamp. It was 9.30, a wild, wet, blustering King-Lear night, and the long Bagshot Hill and seven miles of pedal work against the wind lay between me and my cottage. The drawing room door opened and Lady Ponsonby advanced into the hall. "What on earth are you doing"? she asked, and I flattered myself her voice sounded rather alarmed, "don't be absurd—put out that lamp". I uttered one word only: "Goodnight", and shot out into the storm. Next day Maggie wrote to Betty: "When I got back Ethel had been gone half an hour, and the house was still rocking".

But if she thought she had been in fault or had gone too far, the warm generous note on which the *amende honorable* was pitched might almost have tempted you to work up another tempest ere long. The fact is one could not take them quite seriously; not, at least, if you knew she was fond of you, and in many of her letters I find remarks of this kind: "The worst of it is that when one is full of remorse and ready to *abaisser* oneself before you, you stare and don't seem to know what one is talking about". Perhaps I was the only person in the world who had *scènes aux cheveux* with Lady Ponsonby, but if there were others, I am sure they will have thought about it afterwards—if at all—with a blend of amusement and increased affection. As for her, though of course you apologised in all sincerity for your share in the *bourrasque* (it is impossible to write about her without dragging in French words) you felt it was rather like apologising to the flagship of the High Seas fleet for heading into a hurricane.

How give an idea in a thumbnail sketch of qualities like lovableness or charm—of the warmth, the loyalty, the appreciativeness she put into her human relationships? And then the unmitigatedness of her, the fun of her! Pour out a glass of wine, hold it against the light, and possibly you may guess something about its pedigree, but not until your lips have done their part do you know the full meaning of the words "a beaker full of the warm south". How, then, pass on the flavour in words?

Probably vitality is one of the very few qualities the value of which none disputes (unless in the case of an odious rich relation whose fortune you hope to inherit), and if I have not

given my readers some faint idea of Lady Ponsonby's vitality, then this sketch is a lamentable failure. I remember many instances of the vigorous way she would throw herself into the interest of the moment. Here is a typical one. After seeing the great Japanese actress Sada Jakko, she was proceeding home alone in her brougham—a royal conveyance with the royal crest on it—when the traffic was held up for quite a long time, and she gradually became aware of pitying, horrified faces gazing in at the window. No wonder, for quite unconsciously she was imitating the convulsive epileptic contortions which appear to be on the Japanese stage the accepted convention for unrequited love. Being a wonderful mimic she was working up the role of Sada Jakko's lover for Maggie's benefit.

I remember Maggie (who, alas, died in 1934) telling me that when they were children they were never allowed to idle about aimlessly, but taught from the first to have resources in themselves. " I shouldn't object to your being bored ", she would say, " if it were not that people who let themselves be bored end by becoming such terrible bores themselves ". This picture was completed by Fritz,* my particular friend among " the boys ", who once wrote to me : " Mama entered into everything we did or tried to do to such an extent, that I often think if I had been a shoeblack she would have taken this up, bought books on the subject, and told me how the French black boots, etc ".

From the above may be guessed in what spirit she followed her sons' careers when they grew up. She was a good Liberal and delighted when her youngest son emerged on the Labour side. Also, perhaps with a view to getting a rise out of a Tory like myself, there were many allusions to the Conservatives as " the stupid party ". Nevertheless, as I often told her much to her annoyance, there was a remarkable similarity between some of her views and those of Lord Salisbury. " Have you read his speech " ? I would ask. " No, and I really cän't be bothered to " (she pronounced her *a*'s north country wise, making " can't " rhyme with " pant "). " Very well", I would reply, " then I will tell you what he said ", and here would follow a rapid summary of the speech. And Lady Ponsonby's

*The late Lord Sysonby

probable rejoinder would be " I don't expect it was quite as *glib* as that ! . . ." But I won't touch upon politics, particularly as during the last five years of her life I was only interested in them from the point of view of Women's Suffrage.

The duets of married couples are always amusing to listen to ; and when, as in the case of the Ponsonbys, both performers are really remarkable people, superabundantly endowed with sense of humour ; when they perfectly understand and are devoted to each other, to watch them can be better than going to the play. I knew Sir Henry very little, and was rather frightened of him, partly because of his extreme courtesy, than which there is no more effective shield ; also because rather formidable, or perhaps I should say impressive qualities peeped out through his very quiet manner—indifference, for instance, and matchless integrity. You felt he never had sought, never could seek anything for himself, not even in the way of recognition. If the right thing were done he didn't care two straws who did it, and one cannot imagine his saying or even implying that the suggestion came from him. One of the finest attributes of the old Queen was her instinct as to the choice of her intimate advisers, or of such instruments of her will as would naturally be much in personal contact with her. The Queen once told Lady Ponsonby that her uncle General Grey, who had been Sir Henry's predecessor, was the only person who had ever said to her " right across the table, before everybody ' : ' Madam, that is *not* so ! ' " And it was amusing to read somewhere the other day that she once asked Lady Ponsonby " to tell Sir Henry kindly " (she didn't like to tell him herself, she said, for fear of hurting his feelings) " that when she made a remark he really must not say ' that is absurd' ". One would have enjoyed being present when Lady Ponsonby executed this commission. And I have often wondered if it ever came to Her Majesty's ears that when a certain Prime Minister asked him to find out whether she would sanction the Beefeaters going to Cowes to receive the German Emperor, Sir Henry's answer was : " The Queen says she'll be damned if the Beefeaters shall leave London ".

I think what chiefly headed me back was a feeling that this not particularly strong looking man had a heavier load of work

and responsibility on his shoulders than was good for anyone nearer seventy than sixty ; and from the way he looked at and spoke to her, I guessed that his chief joy, relaxation, and refreshment was, whenever it was possible, to steal half an hour with his wife. Hence a slight sense of guilt on my part, and a suspicion that in his heart he must often be saying as he opened the door : " There's that damned Smyth woman again ". If so, it couldn't be helped ; as long as she liked me to be there, there I should be. To refrain would have been asking too much of human nature. But if I correctly divined his feeling, mine would have been : " Small blame to him ! "

I have often asked myself if Lady Ponsonby was popular with the Queen's Household. A French Abbess has written *Dans les couvents on n'aime pas beaucoup la supériorité*, and if the Empress Eugénie was right in maintaining that nothing is more like convent life than life at a Court, that should settle the question.

Like all passionate natures she had a horror of gush and sentimentality, not to speak of sycophancy and certain other qualities that seem to flourish in the soil of courts. Betty remembers a characteristic outburst of hers at —— Cottage. Someone was fingering the piano, and suddenly a well-known mellifluous clerical voice was heard murmuring outside the window : " As I came up the drive I fancied I caught the sweet strains of an Erard ". Instantly from behind a curtain where Lady Ponsonby was writing, came in exasperated *sotto-voce*, " Tell him it's a Stinkheim ".

Another quality of hers must have militated against universal popularity ; no one suffered fools less gladly. If craftsmen she employed were liars, drunkards, thieves, or, as a maid of hers said of the carpenter, " a mask of immorality ", she didn't mind in the least provided they were clever at their job ; but with stupidity she had no patience. In all closed communities stupid people abound and flourish like the green bay tree, but such could not look for Christian tolerance from Lady Ponsonby. Not, of course, that she would be unkind, let alone rude, but they would be skilfully kept at a distance.

Hence I daresay some people may have failed to perceive wherein lay the fascination of which they heard so much. But

every single soul she liked and cared to attract, all her old friends, most of them now dead and gone, like the Cornishes of Windsor, Arthur Benson, and Edmund Gosse ; others who are still with us, not to speak of all her surviving relations, would not only subscribe to the appraisement here attempted, but would bear me out in saying that she was one whose infinite variety custom was powerless to stale ; also that the real source of her dominion was the automatic working up to the surface of a deep, noble, most lovable nature.

During the last four years of her life I only saw her intermittently. In 1911 I got involved soul and body in the frantic fight for the vote, and in 1913 came my " Flight into Egypt "—sole hope of struggling out of the suffrage whirlpool and getting back to music (which Mrs. Pankhurst and I had always agreed should be done as soon as my two years of militancy were absolved). And then, while I was returning to England in 1914, war broke out.

After my return I only saw her occasionally, for almost immediately I took up radiographic work, first in Italy and then in France. But mercifully, in September, 1916, I returned to England for a few days and learned from Betty that her mother was very, very ill, and that though of course I could come over I must not count on seeing her. Her spirit, so it appeared, was the same as ever, and only that morning, while Betty, thinking she was dozing, was reading the newspaper, a voice from the bed suddenly remarked : " Don't read *The Times* with that reverend face ". I went in for two or three minutes, but she had a temperature, so I only kissed her dear hands, gave her, to her evident pleasure, a message from Maurice who was at the front, said I would come again when she was better, and went away—knowing full well I had seen her for the last time. Less than a week later she died.

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For the sake of completeness I have carried the story to the end of her life ; but, as was stated farther back, it was only in the autumn of 1892, just where I dropped and now propose once more to take up the autobiographical thread, that our real friendship began. So " the best is yet to be ".

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Meanwhile all the time I have been writing this little monograph I have been asking myself: " What shall be the last word ?

And now an idea has come to me of which I think she would approve, although from modesty she might dispute its appropriateness. Or, if not from modesty, then from spirit of contradiction—a well-known Grey characteristic, in fact a family tradition upheld by no one more gallantly than by Mary Elizabeth Ponsonby. Without asking his permission I will venture to apply to his father and mother words written by their youngest son Arthur* about the diarist John Evelyn and his wife—another Mary.

" They were neither of them great in the generally accepted sense of the word. But perhaps they were greater than the great. Perhaps by their ceaseless endeavour, their wonderful purity of motive, their almost instinctive resolve never to abase their standard, their sustained effort to turn the passing hour to good account, and their constant preoccupation to help others, they may have set in motion those little currents of influence hidden from the eyes of men, yet reaching further than mortal man can grasp—not only in their own day, but to the years beyond."

* Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede.

LAND RAIDS IN THE HEBRIDES

By Compton Mackenzie

THE ordinary summer visitor to Skye or the Outer Hebrides will, if the weather favours him, return home from his vacation with impressions of a peaceful land of surpassing loveliness, for the most part surprisingly well populated, in view of the apparent sterility of much of the soil, a country where the inhabitants, although noticeably handicapped by obvious shortcomings in the matter of transport, have the appearance of being reasonably well settled and secure.

Such a visitor might express considerable astonishment on hearing that almost every amenity now enjoyed by the inhabitants of the Hebrides has been acquired within the last two generations. If one went on to tell him that many of the Hebrideans had been, until recently, in the grip of a land hunger and poverty so terrible, that forcible attempts have been, and still may be made by the peasantry to acquire the land that is here the prime necessity of life, and that within the last sixty years warships have been sent to the Minch and marines landed in Skye, Tiree and Lewis to overawe the inhabitants, it is likely that one would be met with complete incredulity.

"Respectable" histories of Scotland do not mention this, neither do the guide-books of the railway or steamship companies. Yet the fact remains that the Hebrideans, through no fault of their own, underwent three or four generations of grinding poverty and intolerable insecurity and that many of the most prosperous settlements now exist upon land which was taken for the people by force, in the teeth of a law which gave almost unlimited rights to the proprietors of the land, and of official procrastination and neglect which have often proved unendurable.

No less than Ireland the Highlands and the Hebrides have suffered from evictions, transplantation, and absenteeism. The policy of Cromwell has been only too well imitated, and in this

case, to Scotland's shame, the imitators were frequently Scottish landowners of long standing. After the failure of the 'Forty-Five had shattered a system that was already a hopeless anachronism, the social position of the Highland laird ceased to depend upon his following or " tail " and became dependent on his rent-roll. With the added expense now involved of maintaining this position in English society, the lairds began more and more to look to their own interests alone. The discovery, made about 1775, that sheep could stand the rigours of a Highland winter unhoused, meant that the laird's rent-roll might very well be in inverse proportion to the population of his estate. So to make the large farms, the small cultivators had to go either to Canada or Australia or, if unwilling to go abroad, to poor land near the shore, where it was supposed they might find a livelihood making kelp or fishing. Or they were transplanted to holdings already occupied which were divided for them. Often the common grazing attached to a number of crofts was taken away for the sheep farmer, while the crofts remained, held perhaps at the same rent, but now unable to provide a proper living for the inhabitants from tillage alone. Gradually there grew up a system by which large farmers occupying the best land marched with small tenants drawing a wretched existence from the worst ; for example, in the Island of Uist in 1883 the Crofters' Commission found that out of a total rental of £5,983 18s. 4d. thirteen large farmers paid £2,763 2s. 6d., while the remaining £3,220 15s. 10d. was paid by 787 crofters. When it is further considered that, while the farmers all possessed good leases, the crofters were tenants at will and utterly insecure, it will be apparent that all the material for a violent conflagration lay at hand.

The outburst came in the 'eighties. The first significant happening took place in 1881, when the Highland land reformers and the Irish Land League held a meeting at Glasgow, at which Parnell was a speaker, and the two organizations pledged themselves in alliance. From that time the agitation was fairly begun, and for the next decade the Hebrides were sufficiently disaffected to cause the authorities considerable alarm. The Crofters' Commission sat in 1883, and while recommending fair rents, security of tenure, and the enlargement of existing holdings,

made no proposals for the creation of new settlements or for the breaking up of the big farms. Nor did any machinery for the compulsory acquisition of land for small holdings exist until the Pentland Act of 1911, although the Congested Districts Board created in 1897 did have the power to purchase land for such settlements with the agreement of the landlord.

This lack of opportunity of acquiring land is at the root of every land raid that has taken place in the Hebrides, and even now, although machinery for the compulsory acquisition of land for small holdings does exist, the proceedings involved are so cumbrous and procrastinating that it is not to be wondered at that land raids have continued down to the present day, and are likely to happen so long as it is possible in practice for Highland proprietors to keep large areas of land, like the island of Rum, in a state of empty desolation. The first of these raids took place in 1882, when the crofters of the Braes of Portree in Skye refused to pay rent until the grazing of Benlee was restored to them, deforced a Sheriff despatched with summonses of ejection, fought a pitched battle with a body of fifty policemen sent down from Glasgow, and, after five of their leaders had been fined at Inverness, kept their stock on Benlee, which the proprietor, Lord MacDonald, eventually agreed to let to them.

The process of these land raids usually followed the same system. When the lease of a large farm was about to fall in, the neighbouring crofters and cottars would petition the proprietor for the division of the farm amongst themselves. This petition would be met with refusal, sometimes on ridiculous grounds, as when the island of Vatersay, which now maintains a population of 240 people, was refused to the crofters of Barra because the then proprietrix thought the water supply insufficient. The same process took place at Park in Lewis a few years later, when the crofters invaded a deer forest and killed over 200 deer after their petition had been refused. The Aignish Raid by the crofters of Point near Stornoway in Lewis occurred a few months after, to be followed by a pitched battle between the crofters and police and marines. In 1906 crofters in South Uist raided the farm of Gerinish, an action which forced the Congested Districts Board to arrange for the division of four farms in South Uist, with the reluctant consent of the

proprietrix, Lady Gordon Cathcart, who visited her Outer Islands property of Uist and Barra *once* in the fifty-four years of her ownership ! At the same time the Barra crofters and cottars raided Vatersay, and after protracted negotiations, interdicts, arrests, and so on, the Congested Districts Board had to purchase the island at an exorbitant price, when fifty-eight families were settled on it. Three years later the crofters of Idrigill in Skye successfully raided the farm of Scuddaburgh, and in 1913 Reef in Lewis, and three more farms in South Uist were similarly raided. As late as 1920 the Barramen, taking the promise of " land for heroes " at its face value, successfully raided Eoligarry, the last big farm left on the island.

The success of these raids proves that direct action has, in remote districts, great effect in overcoming official indifference and sloth. But it is also a sign that no effective means have yet been devised to assuage the persistent land hunger that still exists in the Hebrides. When we have, side by side with islands such as Barra, Eriskay and South Uist which are fully occupied with a vigorous peasant stock, empty land like the Small Isles, with no effective State policy for settlement and the breaking-up of big estates, these explosions are bound to occur, and it would be a great mistake to think that the day of land raids is past until a properly unified and co-ordinated policy for the development of the Hebrides has been adopted.

THE POWERS AND RAW MATERIALS

By H. St. John Philby

THE claim of Italy to a place in the Ethiopian sun threatens very seriously to become a text for the justification of imperial expansion the world over. Mussolini has at least been downright honest in the statement of his case. He is greedy of gain and intends to come by it if he can. There is still, strange to say, a goodly part of the earth's surface not occupied by the great Powers. Towards those "empty" spaces he looks yearningly. Today it is Abyssinia. Tomorrow it will be the Yaman. Beyond that doubtless he looks darkly as in a mirror.

The fact remains that Italy might have had a large slice of Abyssinia with the exclusive control of a further slice without going to war at all—with the approval of the Assembled Nations. Only it was not enough for Mussolini, who wanted more. And still the nations are divided on the issue of offering him more as the price of peace or risking the contingency of his getting more by the method of the sword. Abyssinia, the victim, is left with the alternatives of surrender, destruction or victory. No dog would surrender his bone in such circumstances to the strongest challenger. So the war goes on.

But the example of Italy, accompanied by the proclaimed nervousness of the League, has given more definite shape to ambitions elsewhere, partly dormant and partly in process of realization by different and ostensibly more peaceful methods than those favoured by Mussolini. Japan, earlier in the field than Italy and safer from interference, is evidently finding the present confusion of world opinion helpful to the more vigorous prosecution of her claims. And the action of Japan brings Russia more clearly into the picture as a claimant to some share in the Chinese spoils. But the greatest threat to peace on the colonial issue arises in a direction from which

hitherto we have heard no more than a voice crying in the wilderness. Germany is ready to receive back her colonies peacefully, but she is making no secret of wanting her colonies back. There is unmistakable evidence that the frustration of her peaceful ambitions may lead to more practical demonstrations of her will to satisfy her crying need.

Thus four of the great nations of the world are dissatisfied with the shape of their maps and determined to rectify their deficiencies by any process within their means—not excluding war, if war be necessary.

Are there any nations indeed wholly content with their lot? Some certainly among the smaller Powers, for instance, Holland, Belgium and Portugal, whose colonial position is enviable enough in the circumstances of our time. But of the great Powers are there any content? Perhaps France with her huge empire and heavy commitments—at least we hear little of any restiveness among her people on the ground of inadequate room to move and breathe in. Probably also the United States in their splendid isolation from the naughtiness of the old World, their abounding economic wealth and their political idealism recently manifested in the proclamation of the independence of the Philippines. Yes, perhaps France and America may be counted among the nations content to be as they are and therefore, particularly in the case of France, anxious to avoid any disturbance of the present equilibrium.

But which of all the Powers can be voted truly content if not Great Britain? That surely is axiomatic. She has nothing to gain by any possible reshuffling of the cards. She has much to lose by playing them badly. A pattern to the world in empire-building, the cynosure of envious eyes for the mass and variety of the wares displayed in her shop-window, Britain at least has every ground for satisfaction. Perfectly happy herself, she has all sympathy for the manifest unhappiness of others, some of them indeed former owners of some of the splendid wares displayed in her window. Britain cannot be truly happy till she makes them happy too. It was indeed with that familiar tune that six months ago Sir Samuel Hoare sought to charm Mussolini into the bowers of peace, as he donned his armour to go forth to war.

The words of the British Foreign Secretary, reaching the zenith of his prestige in his famous speech of September 11th, fell on deaf ears in the country to which they were primarily addressed. But in his own country they have ever since given rise to a flood of comment which not only shows no sign of abatement at home but comes pouring in from the most distant tributaries in a ceaseless stream. The Empire is all agog at the very thought of a reshuffle. It is not perhaps certain beyond a peradventure what exactly was meant by the words of Sir Samuel Hoare. It is by no means certain that he knew exactly what they meant himself—as may be said also of his reference to Egypt in his Guildhall speech of November 9th—and it is at least demonstrable that, if his words meant what they seemed to mean and what they have been widely taken to mean ever since, they were spoken with his tongue in his cheek or perhaps in the conviction that Mussolini would not be tempted by his offer. In that case Great Britain would have the credit of a noble gesture without the inconvenience of having to follow it up with corresponding acts of abnegation. It is indeed demonstrable that at the moment of speaking those words Sir Samuel Hoare—or the Foreign Office—was actually engaged in delicate secret negotiations for the extension of the territorial limits of Britain's sphere of exclusive economic and political control and predominance in another part of the world. But of that more hereafter in its appropriate place.

To return to his words—it must be fresh in the public memory that, when Sir Samuel Hoare spoke at Geneva on September 11th, he added immensely to the prestige of himself and his country by indicating, almost in the form of an ultimatum, the firm intention of the British Government to stand by the League Covenant uncompromisingly in resistance to any breach of the world's peace by Italy. At that time those words could only mean one thing—the denying to Italy of the use of the Suez Canal. This threat, clear enough though politely veiled in as good a piece of English as has been spoken for many a year, was followed by an offer—the offer we are here concerned with. It was of course conditional on Italy refraining from an attack on Abyssinia, and it lapsed automatically when that regrettable event took place on October 4th.

It matters therefore little what the words used actually meant. What does matter greatly is their future possible implications, and it is precisely round this point that all the literature inspired by the offer has converged. The world in general and the British Empire in particular have been seriously concerned to thresh out the matter with a view to discovering what might be the practical consequences of the suggested international conference to review the sources of supply of the world's essential raw materials and to consider ways and means for securing a more reasonable distribution thereof among the industrial nations. That in effect was the gist of the offer. The public reaction to it in the British Empire has been exceedingly unfavourable. We are told on all hands that no part of the British colonies, mandated territories, etc., would willingly pass from British overlordship into the control of any other Power; and that, with possible or partial exceptions—for example, Cyprus or Malta,—is probably true. We are told on the other side that we cannot lightly divest ourselves of the sacred trust committed to us in respect of any such area whatever; and that is mere claptrap.

We can do in such matters exactly what we want to do and have plenty of precedents to go on—the recent transfer of the Juba territory to Italy for instance, and a similar transfer of a considerable part of British Somaliland to Abyssinia forty years ago. On the other hand the anxiety of such areas not to pass from our control into the control of others does not argue any passionate desire on their part to remain under ours. There is a perfectly simple and feasible alternative to such exchanges, and there is already a marked and ever-increasing tendency in subject races and mandated areas to insist on the realization of that alternative as soon as possible. The desire for independence is widespread and, theoretically, there could be no surer method of securing to all comers without distinction access to the sources of raw materials than by recognizing the reasonableness of such a desire and facilitating its realization. It is unfortunately the great Powers that stand in the way of such a solution. They argue speciously that such territories as we have in view are incapable of managing their own affairs without guidance. It is a convenient argument which, behind the

scenes, means no more to the government producing it than that it would not be in a position to control the policy of such a country should need arise, and would not be able to close it to its own enemies in the event of war except by committing an act of war against it.

But it is a fundamental error to suppose that the search for colonies is necessarily a search for new homes for overgrown families. Johannesburg has provided work and wealth for millions who have never seen and never want to see the town. Kenya, the white man's paradise of post-war imagination, has proved a land of illusion in which exiled and disappointed whites struggle with teeming blacks for a bare living. Of coffee and corn and cotton the world has enough and to spare, though the poor go hungry and naked.

No, it is not homesteads they seek, the great Powers. A few families may go forth to try their luck in the world, content with the modest obscurity of farming, like the French settlers in Algeria. But the governments seek other things—wealth and power, the exploitation of the coloured man in agricultural areas to turn the wheels of commerce, the exploitation of the coloured man to dig and delve in the mines, the exploitation of the coloured man to make roads and railways, harbours, bridges and great houses that the white man may carry the banner of civilization to and fro through the forests and the deserts and exercise his sacred trust for the regeneration and education of the savage until the savage turns upon his masters demanding—what? Not money or food or clothes but independence! Base ingratitude? Perhaps! folly certainly, but the inevitable result of the white man's rule. The passion to rule (an end in itself) on one side comes into conflict with the passion not to be ruled (also an end in itself) on the other. The philosophy of empire collides with the philosophy of freedom. What is good for the individual is not necessarily good for the race.

We return therefore to the facts of the situation created by the cryptic offer of Sir Samuel Hoare. There is no question of a conference to consider the ethics of imperialism. There is no question of changing the status of any subject race or area. The underlying idea is to consider, in solemn conclave of the great Powers themselves, the imperial surpluses or deficits

of each; to explore avenues with a view to remedying the declared deficits with the least possible disturbance of the declared surpluses; and, if the worst comes to the worst, to pool part of the latter to meet part of the former as an alternative preferable to a general resumption of the old game of grab; or, in the alternative, to devise some scheme which may have the practical effect of such pooling without involving any surrender of sovereignty by Powers with a favourable balance. And, of course, the ideal of satisfying the poor without involving any substantial sacrifice by the rich would justify the contemplation of all the undistributed colonial assets of the world with a view to determining whether, when, and how certain desirable areas still enjoying independence though palpably unworthy of it should be relieved of the burden of self-government and given the benefit of civilized rule. Mr. Bernard Shaw (*vide* his letter in *The Times* of January 21st) is a doughty advocate of such a course.

The suggested conference would indeed open up an immense field for the display of altruistic imperial philanthropy. The great Powers, standard-bearers of civilization, would not shrink from the immensity of the self-imposed burden, but those would be expected to bear the brunt of it whose existing commitments are least heavy. Italy and Germany, Japan and Russia would be expected to shoulder the new packs and might even be asked to relieve Great Britain of some part of her overwhelming burden. And the great Powers would march forward in peace and amity for evermore to the millennium, having finally and definitely by mutual consent parcelled out among themselves the uttermost parts of the earth. Nothing could resist such a settlement; the armaments of the world could be scrapped in safety; the declared satisfaction of the great Powers would be a solid guarantee of peace; and each, at negligible cost to its nationals, would merely have to maintain a small air force to drop messages or bombs on would-be disturbers of public security. The millennium would be near indeed.

Unfortunately Italy has chosen to put some other interpretation on Sir Samuel's vision of the future and has preferred to make certain in her own way of a more limited present objective. At the same time imperially minded Britons the

world over have raised the most strenuous objections to that part of Sir Samuel Hoare's project which seemed to argue a dangerous access of imperiophobia. Had he not already done his best to lose India—happily without success? Was he not on the point of giving away Abyssinia? Was it not more than likely that a man so sick and tired would have been only too glad to give away the colonies also? Indeed the only trace of healthy imperial blood left in a constitution thoroughly undermined by the bacillus of defeatism was a certain determination to keep Egypt at all costs and to close the Suez Canal in certain contingencies—until Mussolini and the Cairo schoolboys called his bluff and had their way.

Small wonder that the British Empire has been uneasy at the prospect of being given away for the sake of world peace. Apart from Italy's rejection of the proposed conference, it is not unlikely that Sir Samuel Hoare would have been forced by public and parliamentary indignation to resign on his proposal to give away parts of the British Empire if he had not already resigned on the issue of his intention of giving away the Ethiopian Empire first. He fell like a man—justifying and proud of his error—while the British Government, loudly repudiating him and his unfortunate lapse, has kept steadily on the course set by him. There is no likelihood now that it will risk another brush with public opinion on the issue of the colonial conference. That, like the oil embargo for the time being, is dead. Italy may take what she wants of Abyssinia if she can, but she will not be offered any substitute compensations at the expense of the British Empire.

The whole of that far-reaching issue has been summed up by Lord Lugard in *The Times* of January 13th and 14th and in the paper's leading article of the 13th. The opinions expressed in these articles command the respect to which they are entitled. They do, however, seem to be based largely on the thesis that the grievances of Italy and Germany either arise out of the errors of their ways or are both unjustifiable and irremediable. That attitude provides no solution of the dilemma. The grievances exist, and are loudly proclaimed from the housetops. The only solution suggested in the countries aggrieved is a return to war as an instrument of policy. One of the

countries concerned is already at war for the purpose of colonial expansion. Japan, if she is not actually at war, is certainly waging something that we can scarcely call peace ; and Russia is doing something of the same kind. It was indeed precisely with a view to discouraging such unilateral attempts to secure satisfaction for real or imagined wrongs that Sir Samuel Hoare made his offer of a conference to discuss the whole question in a peaceful atmosphere with a view to providing such remedies as might prove acceptable and feasible.

That offer, as already pointed out, has lapsed and the British Government is no longer bound by it. But what country could possibly have agreed to taking part in a conference on the lines suggested with the pre-knowledge that its results would be entirely, or almost entirely, negative, as indicated by *The Times* and Lord Lugard ? And surely no good purpose whatever could be served by asking Italy and Germany to realize that " Great Britain has nothing to be ashamed of in the way her colonies were acquired or how her trusteeship of the native races has been conducted ".

Such a statement is far too sweeping and smug to commend itself to the acceptance of independent opinion. Has Britain never acquired territory by the sword ? Has she never been guilty of an error of judgment or of harsh conduct ? It is surely unnecessary to answer such questions. Nor is it necessary to condemn Italy for her present attempt to carve out a colony in Abyssinia by the sword. We had, in common with other nations, the right to oppose that attempt but, having preferred not to exercise it in any effective way, can we justly blame Italy for seeking to obtain by force advantages, some at least of which we in 1925 and we and France in 1906 had already recognized as hers by right ? At the worst we can extend our sympathy to the unfortunate victim of international covetousness and regret that Italy, despairing of ever obtaining her share of the agreed bargain by peaceful methods, has drawn the sword to vindicate her claims. On purely moral grounds Italy is in no worse plight than Great Britain herself. Mr. Peter Fleming would apparently have Great Britain take a hand against Russia in securing for herself a fair share of influence and trade in Chinese Turkestan. His suggestion has doubtless

been noted in the proper quarters which, in common with him and the Soviet Government, are nowise concerned to insist on the maintenance of Chinese territorial integrity.

And now *The Times*, in referring to Lord Lugard's articles, suggests an " arrangement . . . to ensure to all industrial countries fair opportunities of access to the raw materials produced in colonial areas, including protectorates and mandated territorities". That is suggested as a preferable alternative to the handing over of any part of the British colonies and, from our point of view, it is certainly the better way. But would Italy concur in this view, or Germany or others ? In any case the suggestion postulates a precedent agreement among the colonial Powers. Meanwhile we can ourselves play the game they want to play and acquire further colonial advantages for ourselves pending a common agreement to call a halt to colonial expansion. Would it not be more honest ourselves to take the initiative in refraining from creating new bars to the access of others to sources of raw material in addition to those that already exist, and in considering ways and means for reducing the existing ones to a minimum ?

It is true that the claims of Italy and others are by no means solely, if at all, dictated by genuine market considerations. Short of having colonial possessions themselves which they can close to their enemies in case of war, they want to be assured that any new access to supplies accorded to them under the proposed agreement will not be liable to be cut off in the event of their becoming involved in war. Otherwise the whole arrangement would be stultified. The only alternative acceptable to the " have-nots " is a general redistribution of the territories of the " haves " and of such areas as can without difficulty be deprived of independent status. In this last respect agreement might indeed be possible, but no British Government could live a minute on a declared policy of a substantial diminution of British colonial assets. No British Government would indeed dream of giving away such assets. The present British Government is actually engaged in adding to them, as we have already indicated.

Lord Lugard confines his attention to Africa as the most important scene of tomorrow's scramble. There, apart from

Abyssinia and Liberia, practically the whole country has been parcelled out. And Lord Lugard has shown conclusively that with the possible exception of an open door policy in respect of areas now barred and bolted, nothing can be done to satisfy anybody at the expense of Great Britain. But what of Arabia across the way? There we have an exceedingly interesting spectacle, the spectacle of an independent Arab Government exercising full sovereign rights over by far the greater part of the peninsula. And in that territory, as we might expect, there is complete freedom of trade for all comers of whatever allegiance, and unrestrictedly fair access to raw materials subject to the protection of its own and its people's interests by the Government of the country.

To Solomon and Cæsar, Arabia was known as a rich country, and she may yet prove to be vastly more wealthy than we have hitherto suspected. Neglected so long on account of her poverty and anarchy, she has flowered at the right moment in an age which pays at least lip service to the rights of peoples. And today she is as good an object lesson as can be found anywhere of the great advantage to the world in general of a completely independent country, free of political or economic domination by any of the great Powers. Her trade is free, her resources are open to all, and no one will accuse her Government of having granted the Hasa Oil concession to an American company at the instigation of the British Government. No one can seriously contest the statement that the territorial expansion of Sa'udi Arabia would mean an extension of the free field for all those seeking access to sources of raw materials. The same may be said of the Kingdom of the Yaman, whose recognized independence enables it to treat all comers alike subject to the safeguarding of its own essential interests.

It is strange therefore that Great Britain, professing its desire to facilitate the access of all not only to the advantages available in still independent territories but also in territories under her effective control, should actually be engaged, *vis-à-vis* Sa'udi Arabia and the Yaman: firstly, in limiting the natural tendency of both these countries to extend their influence over the hinterlands which geographically, racially and politically belong to them; and, secondly, in securing by the simple

argument of *force majeure* the exclusive right to control those hinterlands and to enjoy such resources as they may possess. It is unnecessary to go into further detail regarding this matter, but it can be stated, beyond any possibility of contradiction, that Great Britain, having duly acquired absolutely exclusive economic and political rights in and over the various Arab principalities that fringe the Arabian shores of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, is now actually engaged in an effort, viewed askance by the other party to the negotiations, to extend the territorial limits of those principalities as far as possible into the interior of Arabia.

This is a fact which stands out in strange contrast to the protestations of the open door policy of which we hear so much. The elimination of the " uncivilized " communities of the world in favour of the various great civilized Powers cannot but have the effect of restricting industrial access to the still unappropriated sources of raw materials and of accentuating the antagonisms which make the policy of the great Powers a perpetual menace to the peace of the world. This is presumably what Mr. Bernard Shaw means by " collective civilization". The actual practice of the great Powers has secured the advocacy of a powerful convert, but there must surely still be many—or at least some—who can see no moral difference between the slaughtering of the Danakil and the slaughtering of the population of Portsmouth by the humane killers of modern warfare. Lord Olivier is evidently one of them. Many will agree with him that " this war is . . . an abominable crime", and that it " has got to be stopped ". But let him and Lord Lugard and other leaders of opinion in colonial affairs not altogether disregard the mote in Britain's own eye when prescribing for the beam in Mussolini's.

AMERICAN JOURNEY

By Harrison Brown

THE European who has visited the United States twice begins to think he knows something about the country. When he has travelled it half a dozen times he realizes the extent of that illusion.

That is abundantly true if a knowledge of the psychology is meant. It is even more so with regard to the country itself. For that matter it applies equally well to all but a handful of Americans. It was on a bus somewhere in Wyoming, I think, that a fellow passenger began to expatiate on the wonders of a petrified forest he had seen down in Arizona. The driver interrupted him : " Say, friend, see those mountains over there ? " with a sweep of the hand towards the horizon. " I could take you twenty miles across them and show you a petrified forest "—he paused for a simile, and finding none continued—" fine as anything in Arizona. Yeah, and the folks down in this hick town we're coming to don't even know it exists". Then with a shrug, " Only difference is, they advertise in Arizona ".

There is still a great deal of North America which is not " advertised ", for the good reason that it remains unvisited, if not virtually unexplored. But even where exploration has been so thorough that it has resulted in a magnificently engineered highway, one is struck by the relatively small number of people who have travelled the territory.

For instance, I drove recently down the Oregon Coast Highway, described as the most scenic road in North America. Until we had travelled it we were inclined to think the description a characteristic example of the immodesty of the booster. Later we became boosters ourselves. But we could find few to share our enthusiasm, for hardly anybody down the coast had been the whole length of it. Quite early in the trip we gave up consulting local residents about the road or stopping-places. Even

filling-station men have rarely been the half of one's next day run. We became discouraged from asking advice at filling stations when one of them wanted to send us, on a wet night, over a hundred and fifty miles of winding cliff road to " the next decent stop ".

There is today a vast army of stay-at-homes who minister to the wants of travellers. They live on the whirling fringe of a mad world which is beyond the reach of their imaginations and, like limpets on a rock, they are visited by many queer fish whose lives are mystery to them. Into their calm back-waters drop men and women talking of hearsay places far away. They pause a moment, laugh and eat and drink, and then the stay-at-home goes with them to the door—" Good-bye, come again". But already the wanderers are speeding off to other hearsay places, and few know even the name of the place they stopped at. It was at breakfast in the coffee-room of a small hotel " with every modern comfort " that I asked the waitress if she knew when the mail went East. " Who ? " she asked blankly. It was the m-a-i-l, I explained. " Oh ", said she slowly, " I've often wondered about mail myself—but I never did find out ".

The Oregon Coast Highway is only one link in the amazing chain of perfect roads which now skirt the Pacific from British Columbia to Mexico. In the course of that one link there are some three hundred miles mostly of hairpin bends. But the reward is a kaleidoscope of scenery such as no other motor road of the same length can surpass.

For hundreds of miles the Highway twists and winds, now at sea level, where the great Pacific rollers crash on the rocks and the spray sprinkles the car ; now high above them, clinging to the face of the cliff. It skirts lagoons alive with wildfowl, crosses great rivers, plunges into ravines where the sunlight hardly penetrates, or scales a mountain through primeval forest which seems unending.

" San Francisco has only one drawback, 'tis hard to leave ", said Kipling without exaggeration. I left it in summer weather one January morning, with a bus ticket in my pocket which was to take me over nearly four thousand miles of roads, most of them covered thick with snow or ice. Throughout that long

journey the buses clocked in on time at all the chief cities. The average running speed, with halts and climbing, was about 35 miles per hour. Actually we travelled most of the way at over fifty.

To a European such schedules sound suicidal, and when we read that in the United States last year 36,000 persons were killed by automobiles, we are apt to exclaim " No wonder ! " In point of fact statistics seem to show that it is the private owner who is overwhelmingly responsible for the high toll of accidents. From my own experience I should say that the best drivers in America are those on the buses, and a close second would come the long-distance lorry drivers.

When fully loaded, the big Burlington Route bus on which I left California weighed over twelve tons. But that is nothing compared with some of the monster " trucks " one meets on the road. Between Salt Lake City and the Coast there runs a regular day and night service of petrol tank lorries which, with their trailers, weigh over 35 tons. Their route is a 700-mile run over desert and mountain.

There are over three million miles of roads in the United States, of which some 270,000 miles are surfaced with concrete or other hard substance. Rarely, except in the South, have the latter grown up with the country from horse-buggy days. They are speed tracks for automobiles pure and simple.

A map of the bus routes of America shows that every corner of the huge country is now covered. It is in such problems as transportation that American genius is most successful. A very few years ago there was no such thing as either long-distance air or bus travel. Today both are as well organized as any form of transport in existence.

But the buses have proved a heavy last straw added to the load of the railroads during the depression. So much so that many of them have either started their own road service or have purchased an interest in such services as compete with their own rail traffic.

The success of the bus is not surprising. They compare reasonably in safety, speed and comfort with other means of travel, and they are twice as cheap. There are halts every two hours or so, permitting far more of the country to be seen, and

tickets, which are valid for long periods, allow the breaking of a journey at any point without notice or formality. Night travel is certainly not as comfortable as a Pullman berth, but even so the reclining " aeroplane " seats of a bus are decidedly better than the hard ones of a railroad day coach. Nobody but the sick or soft need fear an occasional night on a bus. As for the cost, my ticket from San Francisco to Montreal cost just over $45, a rate of about 1¾ miles for an English penny.

In crossing America from West to East one has roughly fourteen hundred miles of mountain and desert to traverse, followed by about the same distance of plains before reaching the hilly region of the Eastern slope. The mountain group of the Western United States encompasses some of the finest scenery in the country, and it is that part of the trip about which I propose to write. In certain other respects also it is unique ; in more than one sense the air is clearer.

The difference in atmosphere may perhaps best be described by saying that there is a refreshing lack of that suspicion which experience has implanted in the mind of the human race elsewhere. If, for example, you are saluted at the " fountain " lunch counter with a loud " Well, friend, how things go this morning ? " the chances are that the slap on the back which heralds the salutation will be the introduction to an entertaining chat. In the East other forms of introduction are more usual, and on the whole more advisable.

The West is also the land of the unexpected, and that, too, is a quality to charm all travellers. On one occasion, having had business in a remote small place off the beaten track, I was invited to partake of liquid refreshment. No time, I explained regretfully ; the only train was due to start almost immediately. " Oh, that's all right ; we'll take the engineer with us ", replied my host. We did. And the only comment was that of the engineer's wife as we rocked down the mountain valley later : " My ! but Jim is making this old train buzz today ! "

Even in such mundane things as buses this atmosphere of informality still pertains in the West. Drivers are changed about each 250 miles. Almost without exception the passengers at the end of each stage say good-bye to an old friend and trust-

fully welcome a new one. Perhaps I was lucky in my choice of route this trip. I prefer to think, however, that the credit should go in part at least to the West.

The places at which buses stop for " eats " are many, and as varied as the advertising. My neighbour on the high stool at one counter was a young truck driver who was giving a poetical description of the Rockies as he had seen them from his brother's aeroplane. I looked up to see a notice on the wall : " Patronising us ", it announced with emotion, " is like making love to a widow —you can't overdo it ".

Humour in road advertising is unfortunately not always so conscious. I can pass with a smile the pawnbroker who offers " Dignified Credit ", and I raise my hat respectfully to the psychologist who calls his underwear shop a " Bridal Parlor ". One is hardened, of course, to the use of sex appeal in the selling of cigarettes, but when it comes to purloining the film star's toothy smile in the interests of gasoline, I register a bilious protest. This last is terrible. I lost count of the number of grinning mechanics in tennis shirts who offered me " friendliness " from hoardings—and somebody's petrol as an afterthought.

Indeed, one must have more than a dash of humour in one's philosophy in order to survive with equanimity the outskirts of some American towns. Sickened by the crass sentiment of patriotic societies and depressed by the grisly forebodings of the gloomier religious sects, one must still be prepared to withstand the assaults of Painless Parker the Chain Dentist. I found myself wishing he could get to work upon the painted gasoline salesman.

For light relief from the more stomach-turning effusions the palm must go to a certain shaving cream which raises smiles from one end of America to the other by means of a line of doggerel on four successive boards, so spaced as to be read with ease from a fast car. Of an endless variety one must suffice :

" His face was smooth
And cool as ice,
And—Oh, Louise !
He smelt so nice."

Amongst the unexpected, too, must be accounted the believe-it-or-not Ripleyesque spectacles met with in endless succession.

In one place it was a coal mine which had been burning for twenty-five years. When I passed it at night it showed like a great naphtha flare a few hundred yards from the roadside. That was near the region where dinosaur remains are discovered, and just about there we travelled 111 miles in 122 minutes, along a broad white ribbon of ice.

In unexpected natural features the road abounds. They range from the Devil's Slide near Salt Lake City to the great slab of rock on the Continental Divide. From the centre of the rock a tree sprouts gaily, having apparently dispensed with mother earth for its sustenance. One night in Wyoming we scrunched over scores of jack rabbits in their white winter coats. For a hundred miles the road was spattered with the flattened corpses of earlier victims, as though there had been a massacre of children's pets. And once, near the foothills of the Rockies, I counted a herd of forty-five antelope grazing quietly near the roadside.

Leaving San Francisco, the bus reaches the summit of Donner Pass on the Sierra Nevada in about nine hours, more than 7,000 feet climbed from sea level. By the drivers it is said to be one of the hardest runs in the country ; it is certainly one of the most varied for the passenger. It begins with a half-hour ferry ride across the Bay to Oakland. There the first thing to strike one's attention is the city's contribution to the safety-first campaign. It takes the form of a large notice affixed to each lamp post. At a distance the only word visible is " DEATH ". The rest is imprinted upon one's startled mind only on nearer approach, and reads " ——walks with the Pedestrian who Jaywalks ".

In Oakland an old farmer and his wife joined us, homeward bound for Omaha. They were to ride two nights and two days, since they were doing the 1,800 miles without a break. As we were leaving the bus station a man strolled up to me. " Hear you're going to Montreal ", he said. " I'm Canadian, too ; see this ? " and he showed me an Active Service button on his coat. " Just thought I'd ask you to say hullo to Coburg, Ontario, as you go through ". He laughed and waved a hand and we were off.

Thence through the Suisun Valley, with its vineyards and

fruit orchards, its cypress and mimosa and the shocking spectacle of quantities of grapefruit lying rotting under the trees. After Sacramento the road begins to rise ; soon there are no more palms or fruit trees and the colour of the ground changes to the gold-bearing red soil on which grow fir and manzanita.

Dusk fell as we reached the snowline, dusk and a procession of cars rushing happy ski-ers down from the snow to their summer-like valley homes. Soon we were winding up the first of many mountain roads, all sign of human habitation had gone, except for the occasional flash of a lamp in some gold camp far below.

On the crest of the Pass we halted. A full moon shone from a cloudless sky upon the tangle of white mountains around us. Directly at the foot of the precipice on which we stood lay Donner Lake, its white expanse ringed with the silent army of snow-laden pine trees. Beyond it was Truckee and the canyon through which lay our road.

Just ninety-six years ago this spot between Truckee and the summit was the scene of perhaps the most ghastly episode in all the long saga of pioneer adventuring. Thirty-seven of the eighty odd men and women who formed the Donner Party died of starvation and exposure in fighting their way across this mountain. Those who survived did so by feeding upon the bodies of the dead. The site of their terrible camp lay just where we took off our skid chains.

A violent past which was but yesterday ; a present crammed with anomalies in which the outworn past survives to rub shoulders with the ultra-modern ; it is all part of the fascination of travel in America. That and the insistent question mark surmounting every horizon—what of the future ?

There was an old lady in Denver, Colorado, when I was there, whose parents had been pioneers from New York State in covered wagon days. Ploughing across what must have been largely trackless waste, they came at last to the shores of Lake Michigan. There the sick and travel-wearied man wished to settle, but his wife refused to consider it. " Joshua ", she said, " so long as you're going West for your health, there's no sense in pitching camp in a mudhole ". The despised " mudhole " became the

site of the present Chicago, second largest city in the country, fifth in the world.

The canyon from the Donner Pass led to Reno, Nevada, and Reno is also an anomaly. We reached this gay city of the deserts on a Sunday evening, at an hour when other American cities make every outward sign of observing the proprieties. Not so Reno. It is in every sense " a wide-open town ".

Main Street was a dazzle of Neon lights and lined with parked automobiles. As the swing doors of the various " clubs " flew open a cheerful noise came forth. Inside it was more than cheerful. A stranger transported there blindfold might have been hard put to it to name the city, but at least he would have known he was not in Boston. Silver dollars lay in piles on green baize tables. There was eating and drinking too, but gambling is the chief industry of Reno, with divorce and re-marriage as a runner-up. For gambling they are thoroughly organized ; from dice throwing through kino to roulette and baccarat, I can think of few games of chance which are not represented. And as my Californian driver remarked, a little incredulously, " In this State, you know, a gambling debt is a legal debt ".

The State of Nevada is about the size of Italy ; its total population is considerably less than that of Blackpool. There is probably no spot in the State from which mountains cannot be seen. In the cloudless atmosphere of these middle Mountain States the eye loses its power of judging distance. Rocks and hills have no fixed dimensions ; of trees, fences or houses there are none. A cowboy on his horse, or a herd of grazing cattle, show up with crystal clearness but in minute size, at what must often be a prodigious distance.

" The Great American Desert " begins in the north-east of Nevada, although there is so much desert around that one feels its delimitations must be hard to fix. The bus-rider has a gauge of his own, however, which especially serves at night. Winding across mountain ranges or rushing through canyons, he travels to the constant accompaniment of the hiss of air brakes. On the desert proper, where the road often stretches ahead for thirty miles without a bend, progress seems almost noiseless and the flash of the revolving air beacons does not flit from window to window but winks monotonously from the same point.

Going East it is in this country that one first becomes aware of real distance. The driver had been amusing me by switching his searchlight on to the coloured rocks of a canyon through which we were passing. The canyon traversed, we came out on the desert again, the alkali shining white like snow under the moon, as far as the eye could see. " Here we leave civilization ", said my friend the driver, though for an hour past any trace of it would have been hard to find. " You may as well take a nap ; the next little town is sixty-five miles ahead ".

A large part of the Mountain Group is plateau country averaging from six to over seven thousand feet above sea level. As might be expected, the rising and setting of the sun are usually displays of colour which make the heart sing. Two in particular remain unforgettable, a sunrise over the Ruby Mountains of Nevada, and, on another day, sunset on a strange rock desert in Utah. The latter in particular survives against the later background of weird night. Before us there jutted up the long low tableland of Biglow Bench, like a ship marooned in a sea of sage bush. But behind us the jagged, snowclad range of the Unita Mountains were silhouetted a steely blue-grey wall against the golden yellows of the afterglow.

Across the Great Salt Lake Desert the road runs straight as a rod for forty-five miles. Around on every side are the mountains, often far away, but those nearer show clearly the old level of the Lake when vast stretches of this country were under water. Controversy is ranging around the crusted shores of this dead sea. For the Lake has been shrinking fast of recent years, as the salt content has increased from about twenty to nearly thirty per cent. If the present rate of shrinkage continues there will soon be no Great Salt Lake.

It is impossible to pass through Utah without mentioning the Mormons, that sect so much abused by the gutter press of two continents. Salt Lake City is uninspiring and strangely lacking in character for a capital which grew up under the ægis of strong personalities. Beyond it one is constantly reminded of the Mormon flight in 1847 from their persecutors of Illinois and Missouri. There is the Devil's Gate at the entrance to Weber Canyon where the weary refugees were turned back by a flood ; at Echo City stands Pulpit Rock where Brigham Young

preached his first sermon in an attempt to hearten the discouraged. Other names and monuments mark this later wandering of a people in the desert.

" My mother was a Mormon. I'm not ", said one young man to me. But he added, " If I needed a religion I guess I'd join their Church. They're swell guys ". " I'm no Mormon ", said our ruddy-faced driver, " but once when I was out of a job and my kid was sick, it was a Mormon who clapped me on the back and said they'd see the boy got to hospital. And they've never asked me to join the Church, before or since". Then with characteristic independence he added, " So happens I got a lucky break and didn't have to take any help. But they're swell guys, those Mormons ; they do as they say ".

The drive through the Wasatch Mountains and over the next deserts was much enlivened by that driver's fund of folklore. " Guess this country 'es quietened down a whole heap ", he would say. " There's one or two tough little places about here though, still. Now there's a town you'll go through presently, name Medicine Bow. It's a mining town, and one time the bosses had got in a lot of cheap Chinese labour. So the rest of 'em upped one fine night and bumped off over four hundred Chinks ". There was a pause for us to assimilate this information about the bloodthirsty town on our path. " Course ", went on the driver, " that was a long time ago. But they've still got sixty-eight different nationalities in that little dump, and it ain't always so quiet ".

We had a stowaway one night. Nobody seems to have seen him get on, but we all saw him get off. Probably he slipped aboard at a coffee stop, and no doubt he was tying his shoelace when the driver counted heads before moving off. Anyhow, he seemed very sleepy at first when the relief driver asked for his ticket farther on. Then he shook himself violently and started up : " Why, what town is this ? " he asked in alarm. " Rawlins ", said the driver. " Gee ! This is where I get off ! " exclaimed the rider without baggage. " Like hell you do ", answered the driver. But like lightning the intruder had dashed out into the snow and vanished up a side street. An actor perhaps.

THE SIEGE OF EVEREST

By C. F. Meade

IT was in the early 'nineties that Clinton Dent, surgeon and mountaineer, first expounded the belief that Mount Everest could be climbed. Not long before the days of Dent, an interest in science was considered to be the only proper motive for mountaineering, and it was scarcely thought respectable to climb any important Alpine peak, without at least boiling a thermometer on reaching the top. Professor Tyndall had even reprimanded the great literary critic and mountaineer, Leslie Stephen, for venturing to be flippant about a barometer, and Dent, in discussing the projected ascent of Everest, was careful to pay his tribute to science by welcoming the important discoveries that he believed would be made in respect to altitude, and by accepting the advancement of science as a justification of the adventure that he was advocating.

Times have changed since the days of Dent, and it is now no longer necessary to justify a taste for mountaineering by lip service to the gods of science. A fondness for mountains is nowadays considered an adequate excuse for climbing them, and although there is no longer much hope of gathering scientific fruits on Himalayan peaks, there have been four expeditions to Everest, in the years 1921, 1922, 1924, 1933 respectively, and a new attempt is now to be made. In the meantime last year a reconnaissance party accomplished much brilliant mountaineering in the neighbourhood of Mount Everest for the purpose of acclimatizing new personnel and studying the weather. Finally, a fully equipped expedition is at this moment at the foot of the mountain.

Certainly the facts revealed by past expeditions only confirm the truth of Dent's theory of mountain-sickness. He held that the more distressing symptoms were caused by lack of oxygen, and that the sufferings resulting from this lack and from

diminished pressure could be mitigated by acclimatization. He pointed out that these sufferings would be more likely to occur in a balloon or in a pneumatic cabinet, since in neither case would there be any opportunity of acclimatization. He referred to " that grain of fact which proverbially outweighs a pound of theory ", and it is evident that he would have understood more readily than modern scientists that only the most uncertain inferences are to be drawn from the results of experiments on animals in a laboratory.

Since Dent wrote his forecast, the recent expeditions have established a good many fixed points in the tactical problem of the ascent. The positions of the three high camps, IV, V and VI, have been settled, and are likely to remain at about 23,000, 25,000 and 27,000 feet respectively. At any rate, Camp VI cannot be much higher, and to establish an extra camp above Camp VI perhaps a thousand feet higher up would be difficult, as it would immeasurably increase the problem of supply and transport.

Again, it is not likely that there will be any change in the strength of the assault parties on the last lap, for it is practically impossible at these great altitudes to organize accommodation for more than two men. If it were possible to make the highest camp (VI) commodious enough to hold a reserve pair of men, such support would greatly increase security as well as likelihood of success. But the doubling of the size of the highest camp would involve an embarrassing amount of extra outfit and supplies with a consequently increased risk of casualties among the numerous porters that would be required. Nevertheless, means must be found to improve the standard of comfort at this camp, for, as one of the climbers has written, " the misery of two men enclosed in a tiny tent, seven feet by four, perched insecurely on a sloping ledge, so narrow that a third of the floor projects into space, may be better imagined than described".

Now the plan of attack upon Everest may conveniently be divided into two parts, the climax of the first being reached when Camp IV has been successfully established at 23,000 feet on the summit of the North Col. Access to this camp, however, is difficult, and might easily become impossible. To reach it from Camp III it is necessary to climb two thousand feet of

precipitous ice, of which only four hundred feet can be ascended without step-cutting. On the way up is a vertical cliff of ice on which a rope ladder has to be fixed to enable the heavily laden porters to ascend. Not only is this part of the route extremely awkward for the transport of tents and supplies, but in bad weather avalanches are a constant menace. Heavy snowfall, such as occurred in 1933 owing to the phenomenally early monsoon, might easily convert these steep slopes into a death-trap, and cut off the climbing parties from any assistance. Indeed, the absence of avalanches in 1933 was supposed to have been solely due to the continuous trampling of the snow by ascending and descending convoys compacting it into a relatively stable condition ; surely a rather precarious kind of security !

The camp itself, too, is awkwardly situated on the narrow crest of the col, which is terribly wind-swept, but offers no alternative site, since the shelf just below the col is exposed to avalanches, and is therefore unsuitable for tents.

The expedition in 1933 certainly achieved a notable triumph in carrying the comparatively warm and comfortable double-walled arctic tent up to this camp, and the result was that its occupants were able to endure the violent storms that might otherwise have compelled them to retreat. It must not be supposed, however, that life anywhere on Everest is at all luxurious. Even at the foot of the mountain the temperature sometimes drops to twenty below zero.

It is above the North Col that the second part of the attack begins, with its intervals fixed at the two highest camps, at 25,800 and 27,400 feet respectively. It is on the upper section of this route that critical difficulties are now known to exist. In the crest of the great north ridge of Everest there is a huge rock-step, barring the way. It has been described by one of those who have seen it from below as " towering above the ridge like the bows of a battle-cruiser", enough to deter the boldest rock-climber. Mallory, in 1924, not realizing the dimensions of this obstacle, had planned to keep to the ridge during his attempts, but a reconnaissance of the great step decided later parties against this course, and in favour of Norton's route, which from Camp VI avoids the ridge in order to make an easy

traverse almost horizontally across the precipices of the north-western flank till the edge of the great couloir is reached, whence, by crossing the couloir, it is hoped, the summit of the mountain may be gained.

A severe handicap here is the altitude, which is acutely felt, so that from Camp V upwards the climber has need of all his strength, and special rations of invalid food are provided. To the very few human beings who reach this upper region of Everest it must seem the sort of country that is only met with in nightmares, a country where the laws of nature are paradoxical. Here you must go slowly if you want to keep warm, or you may even have to stop altogether if you feel that the cold is overwhelming you. This is because the rapid gasping for breath occasioned by the slightest attempt to increase the pace induces a sensation which, according to the very few men who have experienced it, takes the form of a sort of deadly central coldness, due, it seems, to a general cooling down somewhere in the region of the lungs. To combat this fatal chilling process a special respirator has been ingeniously devised which allows the air breathed out by the lungs to warm that which is drawn in. Unfortunately, however, the apparatus is liable to become choked with ice.

Another paradoxical peculiarity of these extreme elevations is that the snow is never hardened except by the wind, nor is it ever melted, for here even the Indian sun has little power. At any moment, too, out of a clear blue sky there may burst upon the startled climber a gale blowing at eighty miles an hour. In this uncanny region the influence of the seasons seems to be reversed, for the snow lies in summer, and disappears in winter. This is because in summer the damp monsoon winds load the rocks with snow, and then winter strips them bare again with the ferocity of its westerly squalls.

As to the quality of the climbing on these upper slopes of Everest, it seems that up to the last stage, as far as the great couloir, it is for the most part easy enough for experts in full possession of all their powers. On the other hand, an inexperienced or exhausted climber would be utterly at a loss here, for he would be continually tempted to delay progress fatally by helping himself with his hands, instead of relying on the security

of his balance, or on the grip of a single boot-nail in the normal manner of an expert.

At the great couloir, however, the situation changes, and the most serious of Everest's defences are concentrated against the attackers. At the entrance to the couloir, and at every point in its crossing, the precipice steepens, and the rocks are now recognized to be formidable, even when judged by the standards of climbers who are familiar with the most difficult ascents in the Alps. The strata not only dip steeply, but the rock formation resembles tiles on a roof, so that on these deadly, smooth slabs a covering of snow half an inch thick becomes a prohibitive obstacle. It is at this point that every attempt has failed, and always must fail, unless fine weather happens to create favourable conditions both of rock and snow.

Indeed, all hopes of success on Everest must depend on fine weather, and on the progress made recently in the technique of high climbing, especially in regard to acclimatization. Veterans whose powers are already known stand in a class by themselves. As for the others, the leader must observe their performances, and classify them accordingly, either as fast or slow acclimatizers.

Unfortunately it appears that simultaneously with the process of acclimatization a gradual deterioration of stamina takes place, and this has a disastrous effect in diminishing resistance to fatigue. In order to give some idea of the two processes, Dr. Greene, writing as medical officer in 1933, explained that an unacclimatized man is a fit man under difficulties, whereas a man who is both deteriorated and acclimatized is an unfit man with his difficulties greatly reduced. Major Hingston, medical officer to a previous expedition, has supplied an ingenious analogy; he compares the interaction of acclimatization and deterioration with the interaction of a drunkard's increasing toleration of alcohol with a concomitant undermining of the general health.

This whole subject, however, is still insufficiently explored, and although it seems to be the rule that quick acclimatizers are quick deteriorators, and that slow acclimatizers are slow to deteriorate, it is too soon to be dogmatic. In 1933, at any rate, the season was cut short so early by bad weather that it was impossible to test the slow acclimatizers at all thoroughly. At

the same time the significant fact must be remembered that in no expedition so far has any member ever been fit for a second attempt on the summit, and none of the high climbers have got off scathless. In 1933 one pair suffered from slight frostbite, and another pair were discovered to have slightly strained their hearts. It is unfortunate that no method is known of testing beforehand a man's capacity for acclimatization. The fact is that authorities differ as to the time required for getting the best results. Some say that at Camp IV a few days are enough, even for slow acclimatizers. On the other hand, two former leaders have agreed that in the case of exceptional individuals three weeks at each stage would be satisfactory, were it only possible.

Opinions differ, too, as to whether the delays caused by the storms in 1933 resulted in excessive deterioration, and whether the time spent at the North Col was not longer than was desirable, so far as the fitness of the party was concerned. Four of the climbers actually suffered the hardships of this camp at 23,000 feet for as long as eighteen days. These men certainly suffered in condition, nor is it surprising that another climber, after inhabiting Camp V at over 25,000 feet for eight successive days, "stood in considerable need of medical attention". There is no doubt that above this height mental as well as bodily powers decline, and there is great danger that the climber may not have sufficient mental concentration to enable him to check a slip that at normal elevations he would be able to control without any difficulty whatever.

Yet despite such severe handicaps the altitude records of the last two expeditions have been remarkable enough. In 1924 four men reached 28,000 feet, and the same height was reached in 1933 in conditions that were much more unfavourable. In 1933, indeed, an early monsoon, accompanied by serious storms, left only thirteen days during which it was possible to work, often only for a few hours a day. Nevertheless not only did the climbers reach 28,000 feet, but eight of the porters were able to carry loads to an altitude exceeding 27,000 feet, and would have gone higher if required.

In estimating the chances of a successful ascent, the question of pace is all important. It is thought that a climber must

achieve more than 250 feet an hour if there is to be any hope of his getting to the top. Norton, in 1924, in the long ascending traverse across the face of Everest on his final day's climb, when he attained 28,000 feet, only accomplished 1,300 feet in six hours. It is as if a party on the ordinary route of the Matterhorn were to take sixteen hours instead of the usual four or five in climbing from the Swiss hut to the top. On Everest in 1933 Smythe was three hours in ascending his last six hundred feet. In his case, however, the conditions were bad, and every year improvements in method tend to accelerate the rate of progress, so much so indeed, that it is now believed possible to keep up a speed of four or five hundred feet an hour throughout the final stage. This would mean that the top of Everest might be reached from the highest camp in four hours, a reasonably safe time-table, since it would allow an ample margin for the return journey, even if the anticipated three or four hundred feet of extremely difficult ground greatly prolonged the time. It is at any rate encouraging to reflect that Smythe and Shipton accomplished a phenomenal improvement in Everest speed records by climbing from the North Col to 24,500 feet at the surprisingly fast rate of a thousand feet an hour. It was only later in the season, as they began to suffer from deterioration, that their rate of progression declined.

Probably the policy of the leader today will not differ radically from what it was in 1933. No doubt to begin with, just as in 1933, the slow acclimatizers will be employed in making the great ice-slopes below the North Col accessible to laden porters, and will subsequently be expected to establish Camp IV on the col. The fast acclimatizers should then follow, ready to make the first attack as soon as they are in condition. To some extent the general policy of the leader will depend on the information obtained by the preliminary reconnoitring party last summer, and no attempt will be made to persevere after the monsoon period has begun. The oxygen machines will probably be reserved for use only on the last lap. In the early stages reliance on this delicate and intricate apparatus, rather than on acclimatization, would, it is believed, be dangerous.

Finally, good weather is the most important factor of all. There must be at least three consecutive fine days, and at least

four men must reach the top of their form simultaneously. Unfortunately the chance of fine weather lasting for as long as two days in succession instead of merely for twelve hours is comparatively slight.

However, if the weather is propitious and the campaign proceeds according to plan, the fast acclimatizers should be in position to attack the summit in the second half of May, while the slow acclimatizers would be ready in the first half of June. With our increasing knowledge of Everest, and the progress made in the persevering siege of the mountain, the odds against a successful ascent in any given year have gradually diminished. Mallory once estimated them at fifty to one against the success of any single expedition, and Shipton, who led last year's reconnaissance, agrees with him. Ruttledge, the present leader, has expressed the opinion that five to one would be a fairer calculation.

In any case it is true to say that each expedition stands on the shoulders of its predecessor, so that, apart from the uncertainty of the weather, the conditions become more favourable every year. There is some reason to hope, therefore, that the coming efforts will be crowned with success.

WHITE PRESTIGE IN CHINA

By Wilbur Burton

THE foreign population of China has always in modern times been a very important element in the country. In recent years, however, there has been in China proper (that is, excluding Manchuria) a considerable change; the prestige of resident foreigners as a group has declined, while foreign investment, though constantly increasing, has rather moved away from direct business and takes the form of finance capital.

In other words, Chinese are more and more engaged in operating the machinery of foreign investments and even of direct business; and as a result wages have fallen and opportunities for foreign employment, except in the highest executive or supervisory positions, are smaller. This is especially true of Western investments; not so true of Japanese investments. The status of the foreigner has also been affected by the arrival in the country since the War of several thousand Russians who, perforce, had to adapt themselves to whatever standard of living they could get; thus these miserable refugees, particularly in Shanghai, have lowered the *average* standard of other Western foreigners.

In the import and export field foreigners used to be completely predominant, and the firms were staffed almost entirely by foreigners except for minor clerks and office boys. Today, more and more Chinese firms are in this business; and, in order to compete profitably, the foreign firms increasingly employ only Chinese staffs or those who, like the Russians, will accept wages little above the native level.

The early foreign business men in China were all traders. With the protection afforded by extra-territoriality and their Concessions, they were set apart from, and above, the Chinese people. This naturally gave free play to the superiority complex

that most persons feel when they come into contact with an utterly alien people whose customs and culture they neither understand nor appreciate. W. N. Lay, first Inspector-General of the Chinese Customs Service, gave most forcible expression to the early foreign attitude in stating that his position was " that of a foreigner engaged by the Chinese Government to perform certain work *for* them, not *under* them. I need scarcely observe that the notion of a gentleman acting *under* an Asiatic barbarian is preposterous ". It is true that the Chinese equally regarded Lay and all other foreigners as " barbarians ". The superiority complex was mutual; indeed, if there was any difference at all, it was even more pronounced on the Chinese than on the foreign side.

In the early years of Sino-foreign relations, the only contact that foreigners (with the exception of diplomatic and consular officials and missionaries) had with the Chinese was with those they employed as servants, and with the go-betweens in native-alien business who are known as *compradores*. The latter looked after the actual selling to and buying from Chinese, and many of them became very wealthy. In fact, they were outstanding among the pioneers in modern native capitalism, and were responsible for much of the Chinese development which has led to such competition with foreign business firms.

But until the last decade, the foreigner was generally the cock of the walk everywhere. From clerk to *taipan* (head of a firm) he maintained a standard of living that was not only infinitely higher than that which any except the wealthiest of the natives could afford, but much higher than standards abroad among persons in comparable lines of work. It was nothing for a mere salaried foreigner to spend more in a cabaret in one evening than he paid his cook directly or indirectly in a month; yet a cook, by Chinese standards, is a well-paid person, making in salary and " squeeze" from $40 to $50 (Chinese currency) a month—which is as much as many Chinese university graduates receive in clerical positions. Many mere salaried foreigners are still able to make such displays, but their number is constantly decreasing.

The heyday of the imperialistic era for the resident foreigner was between 1850 and 1925, and rarely in history have a greater

number of persons shared as liberally in the usufructs of exploitation of an alien land. The Japanese kept pretty much to themselves on a standard somewhat higher than in Japan, but distinctly lower than the Western standard. There were some gradations among western foreigners, with the Portuguese occupying the lower-paid jobs, but there were practically no invidious distinctions between the pure whites, whatever their wealth. Everyone was paid enough to maintain " white prestige " ; the working-day was short and holidays numerous ; long home-leave was granted every five years with all expenses paid ; and most companies made provision for eventual retirement on handsome pensions. For the most part, cultural life was decidedly low, and the Concessions had many of the characteristics of " Main Street " ; but in creature comforts little was left to be desired except relief from the atrocious summer climate. Such drawbacks were more than made up to the Westerner by his being " master " of the greatest array of servants ever employed outside of India or on a Hollywood motion picture set.

Apart from this superiority complex, all foreigners had the strongest possible incentive for a firm united front against any Chinese encroachment upon their " rights ", and this explains their attitude in every crisis that arose. Clerk, no less than *taipan*, was moved to do anything he could to maintain the *status quo*, and thus friends and relations in England and the United States were always bombarded with appeals for strong action whenever the Chinese went on the rampage, as in the Boxer uprising and in the crisis of 1925-27. In England particularly such appeals—both from China and from India—have undoubtedly had a vast influence on government policy.

The very success of the imperialism of the 1850-1925 period was, in part, responsible for its undoing. On the one hand, many of the Chinese employed as minor clerks prepared themselves for more responsible positions, while still other Chinese went abroad or to missionary schools to study the Western technique ; and, on the other hand, Chinese business men gradually started competition with the foreign firms in their own line. Some of these latter Chinese had been *compradores ;* some were native capitalists of the old order who, however

much they might despise foreigners, learned to respect foreign technique ; others were overseas Chinese who had many obvious advantages in bridging the gulf between East and West.

In all cases lower-paid labour, which had been trained in the Western technique, was employed; and in the case of Chinese Western-style firms, there was a willingness to accept lower profits. Thus, Western firms found at the same time that they could employ Chinese for many positions at one-fifth or even one-tenth the salary paid to foreigners, while exclusively Chinese firms were beginning to under-sell them.

This inevitable course of events was sharply accentuated in the first half of the last decade by the arrival of the Russian refugees alluded to above, who settled in Shanghai and the other Treaty Ports. The effect on " white prestige " of this horde of poverty-stricken people is an oft-told tale ; more important in the long run has been their competition with other foreigners. At first, for linguistic reasons and lack of training, they were no more than an eyesore to the white men of the China coast, but within a few years the younger generation adapted themselves to their new environment, and having no other home, they had to make the best of things in any case. The consequences can be seen today in the retail store trade in Shanghai. Formerly, foreigners dealt at a few British stores in which there was practically no Chinese staff. Then some overseas Chinese established three large and well-equipped modern department stores staffed exclusively by Chinese ; these were run as one-price stores instead of by the old-fashioned method of bargaining, which is one of the most ancient and outstanding of Chinese arts. At first, many foreigners thought it disloyal to buy at the Chinese stores, even though identical articles could be got there at much lower prices than in the foreign stores. In the long run, however, the economic incentive prevailed, and the foreign stores almost went bankrupt. Then, a few years ago, they reorganized and came into line with the times. Today they employ no highly-paid foreigners save for a few supervisors ; the clerks are Chinese or Russians, who are willing to work for wages only slightly above those earned by Chinese.

It is the same in all branches of trade. Purely Chinese

organizations are engaging in business which formerly was monopolised by foreigners, and foreign firms are being forced to reorganize accordingly. Even the humble stenographer is now generally a Russian, Chinese, or Eurasian girl. A few years ago American stenographers with the *Wanderlust* used to ramble through Shanghai regularly and rarely fail to find a job there for as long as they wanted it at from 300 to 400 dollars (Chinese currency) a month. They continue to come—all the more since the depression in the United States—but most of them are lucky indeed if they get a job at all at $150 a month, which is exactly half what I calculate is necessary to maintain a modest American standard of living in the city.

From what I have written it must not be inferred that the foreign standard of living, save among the Russians, has been substantially reduced. The 13,500 British, 7,000 Americans, 9,000 French and 3,000 Germans in China are still, for the most part, better off than their fellow-countrymen in comparable positions at home, but a definite trend towards lower wages and less employment has been perceptible in recent years.

On the other hand, the status of the biggest *taipans*, particularly those who have shown the greatest alertness in appreciating the changing nature of imperialism, has improved during the same period. A notable example is the British Sassoon interests. Displaying rare foresight, Sir Victor Sassoon —head of these " Rothschilds of the East ", who in the course of four centuries have traversed the coasts of Europe and Asia from Spain to Shanghai with a steadily growing fortune—moved from India to China in 1929 with upwards of $100,000,000 (Chinese currency). Since then this fortune is said to have been trebled, largely through investment in Shanghai real estate, office buildings, apartment houses and hotels. In coming to China, Sir Victor not only sought to escape taxation and growing unrest in India, but frankly stated that he believed Cathay to be the best field for future imperialistic investment.

The vast Sassoon organization is typical of the new order, although more of its money is in direct business investment than finance capital investment. There is, for example, the monopoly formed to exploit the Hunan antimony mines. Except for executives and supervisors, Chinese are almost exclusively

employed, and totally lacking in that attitude of leisurely lotus-eating for which the " old China hands " still pine.

There continues, of course, some conflict between foreign companies and exclusively Chinese companies, but imperialism has recently become so interwoven with the whole bourgeois fabric of the country that no repetition of the intense nationalism of the 1925-27 period is likely in the near future. A thing that has contributed to this new harmony has been the breaking down of the virulent anti-Chinese prejudice which formerly prevailed among foreigners. This is due in part to the closer contact between the white and yellow races under modern conditions, in part to the " new deal " inspired by the events of 1927. In that time of crisis when nationalism threatened to turn a vivid red, foreigners and the Chinese bourgeoisie equally were fearful of Communism, and the former were willing to grant such concessions as customs autonomy and the opening of foreign parks to Chinese to prevent any further revolutionary foray. Modern development under Chinese auspices has provided not a few openings for foreign experts, who, unlike Inspector-General Lay, are happy in these times not only to work *for*, but *under*, " Asiatic barbarians ".

But with the virtual end of the Chinese anti-imperialist struggle has come intensified competition between various national groups to take the fullest advantage of the situation. Japan started the race in 1931, and has been setting the pace ever since. Germany, deprived of her extra-territorial advantages since the World War, has made a partial recovery by supplying General Chiang Kai-shek with a large group of army advisers in the anti-Red warfare. Italy, whose investments in the country have been exceedingly small, started expanding her interests in 1934 with an aviation mission to General Chiang, and then stole a march on the other Powers by raising her Legation to an Embassy—all largely in the effort to oust the Americans from the lucrative field of aeroplane sales. Great Britain has been using her Boxer Indemnity Fund for development under her supervision of Chinese railways and a merchant service.

Out of this new era of exploitation will come further changes in the status of foreign interests, with every present indication that Japan will score most.

COLONIAL POLICY FROM A NEW VIEW

By Professor G. E. G. Catlin

DESPITE Thomas Jefferson, he who travels may come back, not only a wiser, but a happier man. Some months ago I happened to be dining next to Mr. Bukharin, the late Secretary of the Communist International and the famous author of *Imperialism and World Economy*, to which Lenin wrote the introduction. Mr. Bukharin is one of the fathers of the Russian Revolution. The conversation turned upon the difficult position of Great Britain as a country of which the grain of the industrial structure has been set by Free Trade, in an epoch of economic nationalism. "Britain", commented Mr. Bukharin, "can scarcely suffer from any very serious economic crisis. She has her colonies".

The comment was one that, at first, arrested my attention by its unexpectedness and which, subsequently, I was inclined to put on one side as a mere abstract deduction from the Marxist theory of the capitalist exploitation of imperial possessions. Mr. Bukharin appeared to be saying no more than that the colonial orange had not yet been sucked dry to the pips. Further reflection, however, left me dissatisfied with this judgment. Were the Colonies as disconnected from prosperity at home as I had supposed? Was not the often repeated Russian boast that there is no unemployment in the Soviet Union due to the existence of a vast backward area in Siberia, comparable only to the American Middle West and awaiting development? Did not the British Colonies constitute a comparable area?

The Colonial problem is the vastest and most neglected issue in British statesmanship. "No elections are won on colonial policy". It is therefore readily abandoned by politicians as a field where reputations can be lost, but not made. The Colonial Secretaryship is treated as a stepping stone to more promising posts for ambition. The Colonial issue is one on which Con-

servatives have had few views of imagination since Joseph Chamberlain. It is one which Socialists (owing to the strong strain of Liberalism in the Party tradition where Colonial matters are concerned) have scarcely faced with the determination to deal with it in a fashion consonant with their own basic principles.

The two major issues of our age, those of Peace and of Poverty, are both inseparable from the Colonial question.

Mr. Frank Simonds, in an exceedingly able book, written conjointly with Mr. Emeny, entitled *The Price of Peace*, wrote :

> The price of peace must be paid by those nations whose material resources bestow the largest measure of economic self-sufficiency. . . . So far, in the post-War period, all attempts to establish a virile system of order have failed because of the resolution of the more fortunate peoples, and particularly of the British and Americans, to combine the profits of exclusive nationalism with the benefits of internationalism.

Apparently, in Mr. Simonds' view, unless the United States either abandons her tariff on her foreign trade ; unless the U.S.S.R. abandons her policy of self-sufficiency ; and unless Britain cedes many of her colonies, we may expect the Next and Greater War. " War remains ", Mr. Simonds continues, " for the Germans, the Italians, and the Japanese, the sole means by which they can remedy evils which they conceive to be the consequences of injustice, and are resolved not to suffer voluntarily."

The argument for colonial re-allocation, now openly advocated in Germany by Dr. Gœbbels, on January 17th, 1936, is not only one of power and sovereign prestige. The pleas both of Germany and Italy are economic. It is claimed, whether justifiably or not, that colonial areas are required as markets for the disposal of goods in an epoch of economic nationalism, and as outlets for surplus population. It is fully recognized that the ultimate warfare is not one of tanks and aeroplanes, but of the birthrate. Neither Germany, Italy, nor Japan proposes to encourage birth control, which Fascist philosophy denounces as " race suicide ", but to demand new areas for that surplus fertility which it is a matter of public policy to encourage. The future quality of the population of the earth's surface depends upon the colonial issue.

Issues so vital have yet not struck the imagination of Englishmen with the force that they should because of lack of vision ; because they seemed remote from " bread and butter " issues ;

because politicians were convinced that their political futures did not depend upon these matters. The English, unlike their Elizabethan and even Victorian forebears, have ceased to look outward and have become parochial-minded. They have not seen that the problem of how to build a better England for Englishmen to live in, or Canada for Canadians, cannot be divorced from the policy adopted towards the commonwealth as a whole.

Briefly, colonial policy presents itself in three aspects. Each aspect requires separate treatment. The task of statesmanship is to balance and co-ordinate these treatments. The three aspects are: The Colonies as possessions affecting the policy of other nations; the Colonies as the homelands of native populations; the Colonies as integral parts of a commonwealth that must be made a place worthy to live in.

Let us consider this issue from the point of view of H.M. Opposition. Socialists are committed to opposition to "imperialism", specifically defined as the economic development of the territory of one people for the benefit of some *other* nation that holds political control. Hence, the Labour Party must reject the use of such a term as "possessions". Especially it must object, as Lord Lugard objects, to Colonial or African areas being regarded as spoils of war, or of business enterprise, which ought periodically to be redistributed between "have" and "have-not" powers. The superficially equitable claim of the "have-not" powers is entirely unjustified in so far as this claim ignores the wishes of the inhabitants themselves of the territory and treats them as chattels. Abyssinia is a "have-not" power, and the only ground for preferring the claims, in this context, of Italy to Abyssinia, or of Japan to China, is that Italy and Japan can threaten to use force. Any genuinely equitable claim must be balanced, in discussion through the channels of international law and organization, against the claims of all others concerned.

Further, however, H.M. Opposition is also committed to a policy of social planning—of planning designed to raise the standard of living of average citizens in the commonwealth. It is patent that any such system of commonwealth planning, in the area in which alone it could be controlled from Westminster (i.e.,

not the Dominions, except by spontaneous collaboration), involves the elaborated organization of this area as integral with Britain, and a large measure of freedom, during the working out of the experiment in planning, from foreign intervention and from tying international commitments and economic treaty obligations.

The major task of colonial statesmanship, from the point of view of H.M. Opposition, is to reconcile these two superficially conflicting principles of social planning, with its implications of a closed economy, as in Russia, and of internationalism, with its implications of Free Trade.

The case for social planning, as advocated not only by the Labour Party or Mr. Sidney Webb, but (with a difference . . .) by Mr. Harold Macmillan and the " Five Year " group, and even by Lord Melchett, is far less easily made out in an area of old traditions and complicated social structure, where even small men, wage-earners, and " proletarians " have " vested interests ", than in virgin country or backward areas, such as Siberia. If planning can be successfully carried through in these newer areas, the chance is redoubled for its being made effective in countries of a highly articulated civilization.

The astounding development of production in Asiatic Russia during recent years has been due partly to the fact that, under the earlier regime, it had remained largely untouched, and partly to the singular applicability of planned production methods to areas of this kind. If the British Commonwealth is to heed the advice recently given in an expert report from the International Labour Office that, in order to maintain her position, she must greatly increase her production, it is to her own backward areas that she must look. *The Times* has editorially exhorted Englishmen to consider the growth of production in Russia. It is more to the point to consider what can be done in those of our own areas that are comparable, in their stage of development, to much of Russia.

In certain regions, such as the Union of South Africa, in the case of crops, there are instances of State-encouraged planning that have been inconsiderately adopted and that have not been conspicuously successful. In other regions the opposite is true. The elaborate undertakings of the Mineral Union of

the High Katanga in the South-east Congo, and of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company of Fiji, are of a chiefly, or entirely, commercial nature. The Gezira Irrigation Land Project in the Sudan, however, has required precisely that collaboration between State, industrial syndicate, and peasant proprietor which satisfactorily indicates the function the State can perform. The Sudan Plantations Syndicate here undertakes (and, within its limits as a capitalist enterprise relying on state collaboration, quite successfully) the details of " management ". This success, however, would have been out of the question without this collaboration. It could probably be carried much further, for example, in cotton or in West Indian sugar, were the collaboration or initiative increased.

It is patent that, whatever may be the advantages of private capitalism, the promotion of investment in areas where there are neither speedy returns in the shape of dividends nor secure returns is not among them. Here, if development is to be undertaken at all, it may be urged that it must be by some authority, whether State, chartered company, or socially-controlled corporation, that is prepared to undertake heavy risks because it can afford to do this in view of ultimate returns (not necessarily of an exclusively pecuniary nature).

Planning Commissions, or commonwealth " Development Boards " (to use Mr. Lloyd George's phrase) sitting in Pretoria, Nairobi, Kingston (Jamaica), or Georgetown (Guiana), would be competent to say : " Here railroads must be laid down ; here steamship lines must be encouraged ; here roads must be developed, bridges built and rivers rendered navigable. We are convinced that the standard of living in this community can only be raised along certain lines which constitute the basis of this plan. Complementarily, we propose to encourage the development of the economic life of this community in such a fashion as to make this plan successful, and the investment of capital justifiable".

Such a scheme opens up opportunity for creative experiment worthy of some of the most glorious periods of our history.

Such projects must necessarily have an immediate effect upon the employment of local labour. Provided that some adequate survey can be made of what would be the probable form in which

an extra 2d. a day in wages would be expended, the local market can be made absorbent of goods whose production will give employment elsewhere. The first consequence of colonial planning, advancing beyond the blue-print stage, would be a boom in heavy industries, from which not only Rhodesian copper but British steel would profit. It would, further, have the consequence of providing employment for those engineers who, prepared in our technical colleges, have exceedingly little prospect of employment in Britain.

A conference on migration was held some months ago at Newcastle. The consequences have not been more encouraging than in the case of previous conferences. The Australian Minister of the Interior has announced that the Australian Commonwealth is not contemplating any immediate immigration policy, and the Premier of Victoria has declared, with no small emphasis, that " this does not seem to be a time to bring migrants to Australia to increase unemployment ". Lord Lugard and Sir Daniel Hall, writing with a background of wide experience, both declare that there are conclusive reasons against European colonization in a tropical Africa populated by races whose lands are already overcrowded. Does it follow that every emigration policy is condemned to fail ? The answer must entirely depend upon whether the economy of the area in question is to be static or to be raised to a new level so that, especially in certain fields of employment (for example, engineering) the new economy provides new opportunities. Immigration does not provide the key to colonial development, but colonial development does provide the key to successful immigration.

Throughout the nineteenth century colonies were regarded as the " possessions " of imperial powers. Today, this notion of inferior races, and of "possessions" comparable to the privileges of private property, has given way to a new conception. Colonies and homeland alike must be visualized as fused in one Union, itself a federation of commonwealths—perhaps a British Union of Socialist Commonwealths—which federation cannot be broken up or infringed save by the wish and consent of the parts affected. Such an organic notion of the union, instead of a mechanical one, is implied in any consistent scheme of planning for a population, all the members of which are to be regarded as equals in citizenship.

The task of the twentieth century is to co-ordinate this notion of an integrated and planned Commonwealth with the obligation to fit the Commonwealth itself within some sovereign system of world organization, under which all member states will be beneficiaries, such as can alone obviate the endless recurrence of wars to maintain the balance of power. The two duties, however, are consistent, and even concurrent. There is no need, with followers of Mr. Simonds' school of thought, to regard them as mutually exclusive. It would, however, be a small service to regard either the free trader's solution of the colonial problem or that of the national planner as alone adequate.

AMERICAN FAIRY TALES

By Clemence Dane

THERE is a snarling, intolerant school of Anglo-American thought which asserts that an independent American literature does not yet exist. It asserts that Poe, the son of English actors, is completely European in feeling and expression : that Mark Twain, co-equal of the great Victorian novelists, would have displayed precisely the same genius if he had written of an English instead of an American village : that Walt Whitman is the mere Macpherson of the States, and that his poems will have as transitory an effect upon the American literature as the Ossian poems had upon eighteenth-century European literature. It argues that the use of commercial spelling and the misuse of punctuation, do not constitute a new literary form. In fact, says this snarling intolerant school, America's only real contribution to world letters is her slang.

I do not propose either to maintain or deny these assertions. I merely point out that the critics, whether English or American, who sincerely believe that American literature still sleeps in the womb of its English mother, who still await that imminent bright, terrific birth, are ignoring two very noteworthy facts. One is the American public's insatiable demand for tales of modern American adventure. The other is this public's growing liking for a form of short story which I can only describe as a scientific fairy-tale—using the word " scientific " in its loosest, clumsiest, and most inaccurate popular sense.

Some years ago in an article called " American Primitives " I suggested that America's ' Wild West ' novelettes were worth attention. For years stories of the Wild West, the Frozen North, and the Tropic South have multiplied in the cheap magazines. Indeed they resemble in their incessant increase some tropical forest, whose trees shoot up, mature, decay, and

in death fertilize their own seedlings, until the jungle is choked by its own vitality or some single tree outgrows its neighbours and becomes king of that formless wood.

Such processes occur in art as well as in nature. Just as the saga owes its life to a thousand forgotten folk tales, so, as I believe, will the literature of America owe its birth and life to the endless quantities of magazine tales which amuse the vast American public today and are forgotten tomorrow. Just as the *Nibelungen Lied* or the *Morte d'Arthur* was the final version of a thousand legends based on long-forgotten facts, so will the American epic in its final form embody the cowboy legends of America, and have—who knows?—instead of Siegfried—Billy the Kid for hero. For every nation must have its folk tales, its epic, and its poet, and America is already a nation.

And even as every nation must draw together its legends into an epic, so must every nation crystallize its dreams in a fairy-tale. Its fairy-tales will be the literary expression of its particular sense of wonder, its peculiar ideal of beauty, its special fear, its unique horror, its individual conception of delight. "Fairy" is a word degraded by the vicious slang of the day. One is half afraid to use it for fear of spoiling the beautiful conception which it has so long embodied. But by comparing these myths of—let us say—fauns, nymphs, sylphs, gnomes, sprites, brownies, nixies, pixies, peris, genies, elfs, and fays one with another, it is possible to acquire a very fair idea of the peoples and countrysides which they haunt.

The peri of *The Arabian Nights* is a majestic female, differing from her human sister only in her superior beauty and in her magic powers. She inhabits the heights of the air or dwells in subterranean caves, and her enchantments are grossly material. She rewards her hero by loading his camels with bales of diamonds. Displeased, she beats him into insensibility, or turns half of him into a marble statue, or the whole of him into a black dog.

The English elf, on the other hand, lurks in a cowslip bell, and has an irresponsible sense of humour. Mab and Puck embody the English love of animals, flowers, little things. An English elf can only live in the flowery, well-groomed English woodland. The Irish leprechaun, again, has more malice than

wit, and the banshee is a tragic creature with a private woe and a private war on her hands—as befits the dream of a people temperamentally "agin' the government" of fate or man. And the sturdy kobolds, the chilly ell-women, the elegant fays in turn reflect the character, the desires, the ideals, the dreams and the dreads of the race whose high places they haunt.

Indeed there is no country in the old world which they have not haunted, no land which is not "fulfild of fayrie"—except the United States of America. This republic has not domesticated the Wendigo and the Summermaker of the American Indian. It is a modern state, a machine-run state, a state whose wonders are material, "scientific". And since science is the absolute foe of mystery, how, then, can there be magic in America?

Yet the most modern human craves sometimes to be illuded. He has moods in which he feels that it is his right to understand the speech of the wind and see the light that never was on land or sea. He must put the moon in his pocket sometimes, and split open an orange so that a princess may step out. Beasts must befriend him, birds advise him. He must wield an invisible sword, wear an invisible cap, and be shod with goloshes of fortune. This is his need: this it is in his nature to desire: and no material splendours nor abstraction of the arts will do instead. He is hungry for magic and nothing else. In short, he must have his fairy-tale.

But the moderns do not believe in fairy-tales! What is to be done? The old world squares the circle by feeding itself with fairy-tales in childhood and renouncing belief in them afterwards. But the new world has only fading Indian legends—the fairy-tales of another race. What, then, is the American to do?

Go without? Not at all. He is not to be cheated of a good thing, and he solves the problem of supplying this lacking vitamin in his spiritual daily food in a characteristically American way. He has invented, or he is at present about the business of inventing, an entirely new system of fairy-tales that shall satisfy all his desires for the unknown, shall give him breathless illusions and incredible visions, and yet shall satisfy his machine-governed, machine-stimulated, scientific consciousness. A pump-

kin which turns into a fairy coach is a piece of silliness, but he is perfectly ready to accept (within the limits of his magazine story) the super-speed ship which takes him in one turn of the handle beyond the further star of known space and into another dimension altogether. He will accept a robot, but not a dragon. He will travel to Jupiter, but not to the Islands of the Blessed.

I found my first American fairy-tale on a bookstall in, I think, Chicago. It was a magazine with double columns of clear print on coarse greyish paper with crude black-and-white illustrations and the usual unattractive preliminary advertisements. *Astonishing Stories* is no bad name for it. The cover was as astonishing as the title, though I have seen so many covers since that I forget if it was a picture of a pterodactyl struggling with a seven-handed robot, or whether it was merely a man and woman in divers' helmets, clinging together in the interior of a globular machine surrounded by goggle-eyed footless Martians. At any rate I became a passionate searcher-out of these amazing twenty-cent-worths. I located sister magazines, notably *Marvel Stories* and *Unearthly Tales*. I learnt their American dates of appearance, and recently found that one of them appears irregularly on a Waterloo Station bookstall, to the confusion of the apologetic clerk. He hates me to ask for it.

For three years, in short, these papers have been an enormous amusement to me, for crude, illiterate, slangy as most of the stories are, they do none the less represent a stirring of the ancient sense of wonder, the human love of magic, in a continent poor in legends and peopled by aliens from all over the world. These amazing magazines call themselves " science fiction ", but they are nothing in the world but America's fairy-tales.

We go to the past for our fairy-tales, America to the future, that is all. The Old World knows that once there was a golden age. The New World knows that some day there will be a golden age, and all her fairy tales concern this future.

But what amazing tales they are. *Marvel Stories* calls itself frankly " the magazine of popular fiction ". It lives up to its boast. It describes flying ships and rays of unknown power : rays that will fuse a planet as easily as a burglar can fuse the lock of a safe. It describes supermen who can become invisible,

can travel faster than light, who can take themselves and their entire ship's company on travels beyond our universe altogether, and after some sixty million years of adventures, arrive back the day before they started. It describes inhabitants of worlds not yet born, and the eccentricities of world-conquerors long after the known planets have vanished. But whether a group of human beings travels into eternity in the space of a minute, or a Great Brain controls a civilization of lesser brains all the stories prove one thing. They prove that the New World has the Old World's gift of belief in the unbelievable. Magic has come to stay in America.

And not only magic. The ghosts are returning also, especially in the *Uncanny Tales Magazine*, which, however, is pulled up sharply if it becomes too " scientific", as you will see by this letter to the editor :

> Though I have read *Uncanny Tales* since it started, I have not added my voice to the general clamour. So here goes. In the first place, keep *Uncanny Tales* uncanny. Stories of other planets are O.K. But there are too many other magazines with the same type of story. As one of my friends remarked the other day : " Goodnight ! First they tow the moon around, then the earth, then the sun, then the universe, and then to cap it all they start in on galaxies ".

I join hands with the writer—there *have* been too many galaxies of late in these *Uncanny Tales*. Yet in the same issue we find another correspondent asking : " How about more vampire and good old-fashioned ghost stories ? And less of these planetary yarns ". This suggests that readers of American fairy-tales are able to share the delightful uncertainty of the Old World's small and big children as they listen to :

> A woman's story at a winter's fire
> Authorized by her grandam.

The belief in magic dies hard, even in a modern state. Certainly the editors and contributors to *Uncanny Tales*, *Astonishing Stories* and *Marvel Stories* have resolved that it shall not die the easier through them. I opened *Astonishing Stories* recently on a picture of a piece of travel machinery much more marvellous than Prince Camaralzamen's flying horse. It is lit by Aladdin lamps and guarded by two " terrestials " ; for in these stories people of our earth are never called human beings. They

are invariably " earthlings," " earthmen," or " terrestials ", and they generally share their adventures with Venusians, Plutonians, Martians, or Mercurians. " Moonmen " occur seldom, and H. G. Wells's " Selenite " has not caught on, though there is little doubt that we may find in *The First Men in the Moon*, *The Time Machine*, and *The Sleeper Awakes* the parent and original of half these stories.

But to return to our picture ! Facing the " terrestials " is a semi-transparent figurelet with a huge head and a figure hardly human, as weird as the artist's pencil could make him, and underneath is written :

> " I welcome you to Norlamin, Terrestials ", spoke the projection. " I suppose that you are close friends of Seaton and Crane, and that you come to learn why they have not communicated with you ? " Self-contained as Du Quesne was, this statement almost took his breath away. . . .

Here, you see, is the phraseology of the schoolboy, who wants to get on with the story and doesn't care tuppence about style. The writers of these tales perfectly understand the point of view, and indeed I suspect that they adopt a style deliberately crude, slangy and illiterate in order to accommodate themselves to their special audience. I suspect this the more since a rising young dramatist, author of one of the hits of a recent season, confessed to me that he had at one time contributed to these magazines. A month or two later a distinguished editor unblushingly made similar confession.

And why should he blush ? The tales are nonsense, but they are entertaining nonsense, and they do stimulate the imagination of many thousands of readers. They are not for a delicate palate, nor for a literary palate. Nevertheless they are a kind of food. There must have been many useless variants of *The Youth Who Learned to Shudder* before that weird tale was perfected, or *The Loathly Worm* or *Tamlin*. Educated people may laugh at these crude American fairy-tales ; but I imagine that the educated American will laugh louder than the educated Englishman, while neither will deny that they excite the sense of wonder.

And of wonder poetry is born.

MOSCOW TURNS TO THE CLASSICS

By Hubert Griffith

I HAVE just concluded the rather unusual experiment of taking a holiday in Moscow in the months of February and March. As I know the city well from visits in many past summers, when it is crowded with foreign tourists, there was something piquant in the feeling that one was probably the only visiting Englishman in the place. (I certainly saw no other the whole time I was there.)

My business was with theatres, and I went to the theatre almost every night for a month. I got one main impression—of a positive wave of popular enthusiasm returning to the classics ; and a vivid memory of two particular performances.

To illustrate this fervour for the classics, of their own and all other countries, I will simply quote the theatre-list of plays to be seen during a single week of my stay. The list is no special " Theatre Festival " list, such as is drawn up in Moscow each September for the benefit of foreign visitors to the Festival. Being an Englishman alone in Moscow I had simply come in for a normal cross-section of the normal winter programme.

Here are some of the plays, all occurring in the repertories of the theatres once, or sometimes twice, during a period of seven days. There were four Shakespeare productions, *Othello*, *Twelfth Night*, *King Lear* (said by Mr. Gordon Craig to be the finest he has seen in his life, but I did not see it and so cannot pass judgment), and *Romeo and Juliet*. I will come to *Romeo and Juliet* in a minute. But here it may be mentioned that no four Shakespeare plays have been running concurrently in London since the day they were written.

Among other English classics I find Sheridan's *The Rivals* (a recent great success), Fletcher's *The Spanish Curate*, a play which only English connoisseurs of Elizabethan literature know about, but which has been turned into a Moscow success ; and, yes, my eyes do not deceive me, a play done by the first

theatre in Moscow, the original Moscow Art Theatre, called *Pickvicksky Klub*! This magnificent theatre, that still retains all its traditions, has recently found a wild popular success in its adaptation of our own *Pickwick Papers*!

Among classics of other countries, again in this same week, are Schiller's *Don Karlos*, Scribe's *Verre d'Eau*, two plays made from novels of Balzac, Dumas' *Dame aux Camélias*, Shaw's *Devil's Disciple*, and a long list of Russia's own classic plays.

After reading this list, and seeing many of the plays carried out, sometimes competently, sometimes superbly, one is amazed at the wealth and variety of the Moscow stage of the moment. It is no amateur or enthusiast dazzled by his first visit (for I have been observing Russian plays for the last six years) who now pronounces the opinion that the Moscow stage is easily the first in Europe.

A particularly vivid impression remains of the *Romeo and Juliet*. It was played in a huge barn of a theatre, the Theatre of the Revolution, holding two thousand people. The interest was as much in the audience as in the play. The play was finely staged, and was taken seriously, quickly and excitingly. Even without the magic of the native verse one got the magnificence of the tragedy of the two young lovers crossed either by their stars or the rivalry of their two houses. But the sudden thrill of the occasion, for me, was to realize that I was among an audience of two thousand people who did not know the plot —who had no idea of what was coming next! They were staggered by it. The astonished "ooooh . . .!" that went through the whole theatre, when the supposedly dead Juliet sits up from her tomb, was like a breath of wind. It was an audience as innocent and impressionable as that at Shakespeare's own first night. And at the end they gave the young Juliet fourteen curtain-calls.

Another occasion was a new Soviet play, written by a young Soviet author, Afinogenov, called *Dalekoe* (*The Distance*). I may be wrong about this, but it seemed to me the first complete and mature play that has come out of Soviet Russia. Plots of plays are boring as a general rule, but this much may be said of it. Its central character is a General of the rank of Army-

Corps Commander, who has been given only three months by his doctors to live. He knows this fact, but does not think that his wife knows it. His wife knows it, but does not think that her husband knows it. The scene in the last act where someone blurts out the secret, and husband and wife stand before one another, each at last knowing that the other knows, is one of the most moving I have ever seen in modern drama. Enthusiastic Russians have told me that the play is " too indeterminate ", that it is " not propagandist enough ", and so forth. It is precisely for this reason—that because whatever " propaganda ", i.e., point of view of life, is in it, is deeply hidden in its inward mesh and comes straight out of the heart and situation of the characters—that I hail it as a great and moving play, and in the great human Russian tradition. I have arranged to translate it, and the London public will, I hope, have a chance of forming their own opinion of the matter.

Some details remain to be noted. Theatres are full nearly always in Moscow. I have marked this point in successive years. Theatre seats are cheap—but not absurdly cheap. A stall at the Opera or Ballet costs roughly eight or nine shillings. (I am not allowing for the artificial rate of exchange, which would make it cost about twenty-five shillings, but interpreting it into terms of proportionate income and buying-power of a Russian.) A stall at any ordinary theatre costs five or six shillings. The gallery anything from sixpence to one-and-six.

A Moscow theatre company is coming with a repertory to London in May. It is the Kamerny Theatre, which has always specialized in doing " foreign " plays to its Moscow audiences. In its time it has done Shakespeare, Shaw, Singe, Wilde, O'Neill and a host of others. Its programme will probably consist of one Russian classic, Ostrovsky's *The Storm*, one modern revolutionary play, *The Optimistic Tragedy*, and several foreign plays, and possibly a couple of O'Neill's.

There are people in Moscow who disparage the Kamerny from different angles, first, because it is not as naturalistic as the First Moscow Arts Theatre, and, secondly, because it is not as wildly experimental as Meyerhold and others. But its medium course and its broad international outlook make it a notable Moscow theatre.

A CANOE IN NUBIA

By Major R. Raven-Hart

BEYOND the noisy Egypt of the agitators lies Upper Egypt of the peasants, desiring only to be left in peace under a reasonably uncorrupt Government, and of this Egypt we hear little; but beyond Upper Egypt lies Lower Nubia, the district from Aswân to the frontier of the Sudan, of which we hear nothing.

I went down the Nile from Wâdi Halfa in the Sudan to Aswân last autumn (and on to near Luxor) in a canoe: I wanted to see the riverside temples, and I had not the money to hire a sailing-boat. As I was alone, one partner after another having had to let me down, and as I loathe cooking I ate at the villages, camping near them or sometimes sleeping in them. Doing a cruise in that way you do get to know the people of a country, and to like or dislike them intensely. I liked the Nubians so much that I made a point of seeing all I could of them in Cairo after the cruise: I found them there by the hundred, their honesty making them preferred in positions of trust even by Egyptian families and firms. They look on these years among the "flesh-pots of Egypt" as years of exile, to be got through as soon as possible, but few Nubian families could exist without the money sent them by the sons in Egypt.

Although their country is part of Egypt politically it has very little in common with it. The Nubian is not of the same race as the Egyptian, even if they sprang from a common stock six thousand years ago: his nearer kindred are over the frontier in the Northern Sudan, a successful mixture of that ancient stock with all sorts of later invaders—negroid, and Blemmye (whatever that virile race was that forced Roman Emperors to pay them tribute), and Arab, and Turkish. You can tell a Nubian from an Egyptian at a glance: he is blacker, usually better built and often superbly so, with long greyhound lines

that make the lads when stripped for work or bathing look like Greek bronzes of a good period.

My first contact with the Nubian was in many ways typical. At Abu Simbel the only decent landing I could see was below the temples, near a group of about six houses, all the village that there was. I foolishly landed without shoes, and at once picked up three vicious thorns from a branch half-buried in the sand. Still holding the mooring-line I sat down to remove them ; and just at that inopportune moment a man and a boy of about sixteen arrived and greeted me. Experiences in Egypt had prepared me for a chatter of monkey-like inquisitiveness, and for demands for *bakshîsh* as a prelude to limited helpfulness ; and for the need to keep a close watch on my gear.

Before I could search for words the man had taken the rope from me and made fast to a tree (with a round turn and two half-hitches as I noted with interest later) and the lad was down on his haunches and had those thorns out—and he patted the sole of my foot when the third was out, with a smooth smile at it, quite perfectly conveying " There, old foot, you're all right now ". He then slipped off his baggy trousers and rolled up his long outer robe so as to plunge, quite unasked, ankle- and calf-deep into the mud and get me my shoes. Then he and his friend helped me to unfurl and pitch the tent (with those little exclamations of wonder that do so flatter a camper) ; and as we worked they began to ask questions—" You come alone from Wâdi Halfa ? Ya salaam ! I hope you like our country ? "

And then, just as I began to think of tips and *bakshîsh* I found that they had unobtrusively slipped away, with farewells so casual that I had not appreciated them as such.

After a needed rest I prospected, and a dear old man set out from his house to greet me. He talked Italian, learnt as a storekeeper in Cairo : he brought me bread and butter and dates and tea and milk, all that I felt like for the moment—the bread took the form of the flapjacks that I came to like so much, made from millet flour in paper-thin discs two feet or more in diameter. The dates were also a novelty to me, dry and nutty-flavoured, not the sweet and rather sickly ones exported. I found them perfection to eat meditatively while paddling, spitting the stones overboard with a satisfying plop.

Refreshed by rest and food I visited the temples: the old man first looked astonished and then amused when I said something about leaving all my stuff lying about with no one to watch it: "This is Nubia, not Egypt," he said. Later he brought me similar food for supper, with the addition of hard-boiled eggs, and sat with me and smoked and told me stories (traditional ones of Goha the Simpleton, always being fooled and yet usually coming off best in the end). He made great difficulties about taking payment for the food, but I managed to mix it up with a hand-shake and the remains of a packet of Italian cigarettes, bought at Naples on my way out, and a treasure to him because of their associations with his Cairo days.

The Nubian is hospitable in the extreme: there was never a day but I had half a dozen invitations to land, to eat with a group near the bank or to drink tea with the crew of a tied-up boat. Sometimes I was simply forced to accept the pressing invitations, eating biblically from a common dish of stew with bread-padded fingers, or drinking very sweet and strong tea, milkless but flavoured with mint.

It was at one of the rebuilt villages, up on the rocky heights where nothing will grow, so as to be above the reservoir-level, that I was the guest of the village carpenter, in baggy white trousers and an embroidered waistcoat over a torso of polished black diorite. He entertained me in his workshop, his house having one room only. I supped on eggs and bread and vegetable marrows and a pigeon, and slept there: there are few countries where I would leave my boat and all my gear a good four hundred yards away, down on the bank, over-night, but I had by now realised fully that Nubian honesty, though proverbial, was not merely a proverb.

Next morning my host awakened me with the usual tea; and then flatly refused to accept payment for anything. I had often difficulty in paying, but here there was definitely nothing doing, neither by putting it on his work-bench, nor under his tablecloth, nor by saying it was for his children, two rather sweet and very shy little girls.

Sixty years ago the Nubian was a savage, going himself practically naked and his children entirely so, using bows and arrows and hide shields and boomerangs, washing little but

smearing himself with castor-oil : he was, in fact, hundreds of years behind even the Egyptian peasant.

In those sixty years he has caught up and passed Egypt. Nubian villages are cleaner than those below Aswân ; Nubian children are better cared-for, and rarely run naked except when bathing ; his houses are better built and more interesting architecturally, using very effective brick-work ornamentation and excellent proportions. A good example of Nubian progressiveness is their boat-building. In Upper Egypt the method described by Herodotus over two thousand years ago still flourishes, small pieces of wood being built up into a laborious mosaic, and the boats are hogged, with a huge rudder : in Nubia long imported planks are used, centre-boards often built in, and except for the rig they might well be British-built craft. Again, my carpenter host had not only the old frame-saw but also modern ones, tenon and keyhole included ; and not only gimlets but also a brace and bits.

Six centuries in sixty years is good going ; and into the bargain the Nubian has had the sense to take the good and leave the bad—his morality is still very high, alcohol is rare, and he has not succumbed to European clothes (regrettably made compulsory in higher-grade Government schools in Egypt), nor even allowed the silly Turkish *tarbûsh* to displace the dignified turban. In fact, the only Western " vices " that he seems to have adopted are tea and tobacco.

In the evenings at the larger villages I nearly always had a circle of visitors at my tent-door. At Dabûd they even included the *imâm*, the prayer-leader of the village mosque : until his arrival the group of men had included no one who could read, and a cutting about me from a Cairo Arabic newspaper was handed over for reading aloud to one of the smaller children present, a boy of about seven. He performed the task to general satisfaction and earned envious applause : at these larger villages they see to it that their children get the education which they themselves missed. He was a nice infant : he sat next to me and listened, and was always gazing solemnly at me whenever I glanced round, instantly looking away with a shy smile when he caught my eye. A cord round his neck carried a small amulet-pouch, and I asked the *imâm* what the amulet was : he

said that they often contained a list of the ninety-nine Names of God, Who alone knows the hundredth (though the camel thinks he does, which is why he is so supercilious). He was very pleased that this child had been able to read my cutting, and made him write the name of the village in the sand for me, and his own names, first however making sure that the name of the Prophet was not among them " since the sand might not be clean ". Afterwards he rewrote them himself, in superb flowing curves : Arabic looks as if it had been designed with sand as a medium.

The group continually changed its composition as people came and went, once rising to about twenty when some men with camels joined us, their mouse-grey beasts remaining in the background and looking very like a Great Lady Not Being Amused. One of the standard subjects of inquiry, here as previously, was for news of the Italo-Abyssinian War. The first time that the query was put to me I was completely stumped by " Habash ", and got there only after an elaborate pantomime between two men, one tapping himself on the chest for " Mussolini " and producing a very fair parody of his glare, and the other taking the part of " Habash " ; and a war ensuing. Needless to say they were violently anti-Italian and, to my surprise and pleasure, they not infrequently made a clear distinction between " Italiano " and " Mussolini ".

One thing at least I learned from my cruise : that Lower Nubia is not Egypt, in race, or language, or sympathies. I believe that if the Nubian could be given a chance to express his wishes he would vote overwhelmingly for a transfer of the district to the Sudan, provided that it remain an *Anglo*-Egyptian Administration. His chief reason for desiring such a transfer is his distrust of Egyptian officials, probably unjustified today : in the past there was a most unfortunate habit of disciplining minor officials by sending them to Nubia. The distrust, however, persists, as does his dislike of and contempt for the Egyptian generally ; and it would be better for all concerned, Egypt as well as Nubia, to deal with the discontent arising from his prejudices now, when the question of the Sudan comes up for final settlement, rather than to leave it as a source of trouble for the future.

DEATH OF MICHEL TURBIN

By Albert Jarosy

AT four o'clock in the afternoon they brought the prisoners into the yard and " stood them against the wall ". They were ten men, ten damned capitalists who had been caught in the act of escaping over the Finnish frontier. They did not waste much time over them. Why take them to the town ? The village soviet was good enough. " You've only to look at their faces, comrades ! Fat bourgeois they are, who wanted to sell our country to the foreigners ! " yelled the president. And when Nosoff the shoemaker suggested they ought to be handed over to Lenin, he bellowed at him, " *I'm* Lenin here ! Shoot 'em ! "

They locked them up in the village school. The Red Guards were ordered to dig a grave big enough for the lot. Nosoff the shoemaker drew up the report. He was the only one who could write.

It was a bitter cold afternoon. Since early dawn the snow had been falling in big flakes ; they floated down like soft white feathers. At four o'clock it was already dusk. The soldiers on guard before the school were freezing ; from time to time they stamped their feet, or whirled their arms about like startled birds. The soldier Riwosch would have liked to talk to his comrade, but the Lett understood neither Russian nor Yiddish. A hopeless people !

Riwosch was feeling uncomfortable. He had been through the war, fired off a lot of cartridges, but never seen the enemy. He had lain in the trenches weeks, months at a time ; grenades exploded, you crawled under cover, you fired, you were transferred to the rear, you got leave, you were packed into cattle-trucks, you crawled out again somewhere, you fired, you crawled under cover—but the enemy remained far, far away. Riwosch

felt uncomfortable. Here there would be only ten paces between. One would see the enemy !

The sergeant and eight men came marching up. The two sentinels were ordered to fall in behind. The doors were thrown open and the prisoners driven out into the yard. Riwosch was at the end of the line. He peered at the faces of the unfortunates. He felt no pity. They were damned capitalists, counter-revolutionaries ! It snowed and snowed unceasingly. In the left-hand corner of the yard a black hole gaped—the grave. Ten men stood against the wall, old ones and younger ones ; they uttered despairing cries, bellowed with terror. One of them fainted. They propped him up with his face against the wall.

" Ready ! " commanded the sergeant. The soldiers stood at attention, facing each his destined victim. " Present ! Fire ! "

A volley crashed, then another. A flock of jackdaws shot, cawing loudly, into the air. They screamed like tormented children, circled round the cupola of the church, darkened the sky, disappeared. Ten corpses lay in the snow, ten dark shadows. The soldiers did not wait for the word of command ; they ran out of the yard, and the sergeant followed. In the school-room they brewed tea, and set the gramophone going. It was an old model with a big horn, and played only two records : the *Internationale* arranged for a brass band, and a speech of Trotzky's that all the soldiers knew by heart.

At the end of an hour the sergeant reappeared. Two soldiers were to throw the bourgeois into the grave. Again the lot fell to Riwosch and his fellow-sentinel. Why must it always be he ? The others laughed. Riwosch, the hero, is afraid of dead bourgeois ! One of them began barking loudly. These Jews are more afraid of dogs than ghosts !

They stamped in the darkness through the snow. A white shroud of glittering flakes covered the corpses. The Lett grabbed Riwosch by the arm and held him back. " Heh " ! grinned the soldier, raised his left leg, pointed to his broken boots, pointed to the dead men, gesticulated. Riwosch understood : ten pairs of boots ! The Lett counted on his fingers. Riwosch nodded : the spoils should be divided. They fetched the shovels. Then they took the first of the bourgeois, one by the head, the other by the feet. They tugged in unison :

Huh . . . Hrrrumpf ! Then the corpse was swung twice back and forth, and shot into the grave.

The Lett wiped the sweat from his face. Eight pairs of boots stood against the wall. Some of them had been the devil to get off. They stuck to the feet as though they had been cast in one piece with them ; one had to pull like mad ! Two more, thought Riwosch, five pairs of boots, first-rate goods ; that's not bad ! He'd sell four pairs. That'd mean a lot of money. Suddenly a disturbing possibility occurred to him.

" Heh ! " he said to the Lett, and pointed first to the boots and then to the schoolhouse. The soldier did not understand. The stupid lout ! It was a long while before he caught on. The others ! If the boys were to see the boots they'd simply run off with them. That would be the end of the deal. The Lett scratched his head behind his ear. Then he threw the shovel down on the snow, went up to the wall, came back again and drew Riwosch along with him. The wall was barely two men's height ; in the corner a big piece had broken away. They understood each other. Riwosch was to bury the two last corpses by himself. Meanwhile the other would hide the loot in the village, and old Zukoff would sell it in the town.

The boots flew over the wall. Then Riwosch held out his hands for his comrade, like stirrups. The Lett climbed on to his shoulders, drew himself up by the wall, sat astride the top, and let himself drop into the snow on the other side. There was no sound.

Riwosch was alone. He seized one of the dead men by the feet and dragged him towards the grave. He was heavy, the bourgeois ! At first he slid along the snow like a sledge, then his head hit against something hard. A shudder went through his body and suddenly he gave a little moan. Riwosch let go in terror. A paralysing horror took possession of him. He bent over the dead man.

The dead man opened his eyes and stared at him in silence. " God of righteousness ! " gasped Riwosch. The man lay there motionless ; then he whispered, " Pomilui ! Have mercy on me ! " Riwosch's head began to spin. He remembered how he had aimed at the man—no, he hadn't aimed ! He had fired like you did in the war, anywhere, straight ahead. The

bourgeois raised his head slowly, a bald head. Sat up, felt over his body, stood up. He was absolutely unharmed !

" Pomilui ! " he repeated. Riwosch said not a word. He led the man to the wall. " Quick ! " he whispered, and held out his hands like stirrups. The man swayed as though he were drunk. Riwosch had to support him. At last he was astride the wall, with his head sunk on his breast as though he meant to wait up there for the dawn.

" Go to the devil ! " swore Riwosch. The man disappeared. Riwosch listened. No fall was heard, nor footsteps. He stood there a long while thinking the same words over and over : God of righteousness ! God of righteousness ! He could not get away from it ; he could not tear the thought from his soul. God of righteousness ! Riwosch, the soldier, had not killed his enemy !

The Lett stole back into the yard. They threw the last corpse into the grave and shovelled the earth over.

" There's a pair of boots missing ", the Lett showed on his fingers.

" Idiot ! " snarled Riwosch. His teeth were chattering as though he were in a fever.

Michel Turbin was still standing on the other side of the wall. The tears ran down his cheeks without stopping. He wept unrestrainedly, like a little child. Sobbing, he wiped the snow from his bald pate. What had happened ? What had they done to him ? They had killed him !

He saw the muzzle of the gun aimed at him, heard the crash of the volley. His heart beat as though it would burst. Then he heard Riwosch's voice, quite plainly, cursing : " Idiot " ! He took fright, began to run, lost his way in the dark, blundered against posts and fences, fell, scrambled up a slope and found himself all at once on the high-road ; ran on till he had left the village behind him and gained the open fields. Then he halted.

Once more he felt all over his body as though afraid of being mistaken. The back of his head ached ; a big bump, that was all. He struck his breast with his fists, pinched his arms and his thighs, moved his limbs about. He was alive ! The others were all dead, mouldering clods. Only he, Michel Turbin . . .

Hurriedly he searched his pockets. They were empty. They had robbed him of his papers, his money. . . There was something special about the money . . . He remembered dimly that there was something special about it, but what it was had been blown away out of his brain.

The snow was leaving off. It was freezing. A pale moon ventured out between the clouds. Michel Turbin reflected: Whither? His friends were dead. There was nobody to take him in and hide him. He thought with all his might, but not a name occurred to him. It was as though the names had all been wiped out. He felt as though the soldiers had shot away all his memories, everything that had filled his life up to the day when he and the others had decided on the plan to escape.

He sat down exhausted on a milestone by the side of the road. He was hungry. His head was as heavy as lead; he was tired, deadly tired. With his head buried in his hands he sat there . . .

The creaking of sleigh-runners roused him from his stupor. It was a flat peasant sleigh, drawn by a shaggy little horse, which pulled up a few feet away from him. In the hay lay an old peasant with his fur cap drawn over his ears.

"Hey, comrade, would you like a lift?"

Michel Turbin got up. Trembling with cold he approached the sleigh. "Have mercy!" he wanted to say, but he could not utter a sound. He looked like a ghost. His terrified eyes stared out of dark caverns, his wet scalp gleamed in the dim moonlight.

The peasant was sitting up now. When the ghost of the dead bourgeois rose up before him he uttered a piercing shriek. Kneeling in the hay he tore his cap from his head and crossed himself. Then he sprang up, swung himself out of the sleigh and ran like a hunted animal back to the village. Michel Turbin watched him till he disappeared in the darkness. Then he mounted the sleigh, seized the reins and drove away. His blood grew warmer, and gradually the numbness of his brain gave way. He could feel distinctly that it was beginning to work again. Quick! Quick! it said. On, on, as fast as possible! He whistled through his teeth, yelled "*Spishi!*" to the horse, and was scared by his own voice.

The little nag trotted along, panting hard; it shied when

a deep rut frightened it, galloped whenever the road ran downhill. Michel Turbin wound the reins round his forearm. With the other hand he covered himself with the hay up to his hips. He felt something soft and drew it out. It was the peasant's fur cap. He put it on, and felt his lips twitch in a trembling smile. It was warm, deliciously warm! Greedily his hand felt around in the hay. There was a sack there, and beside it, wrapped in a cloth, a piece of bread and half a sausage. Michel Turbin gulped down great mouthfuls in frantic haste.

A dark forest closed round him, sinister and threatening. The little horse raced past the snow-laden fir-trees, shying whenever the whimpering cry of an owl rent the silence. A village came into sight. Michel Turbin slackened the reins. Through the frozen windows of the cottages shimmered the soft light of the little oil lamps under the ikons. In the distance could be heard the noise made by the night-watchman, clattering two pieces of wood together. Dogs barked. The road wound steeply up towards the shadow of a monastery. The little horse trotted slowly on.

Michel Turbin lay in the hay and thought things over. He was dead. His name would have been erased from the *Kommissariat*. Michel Turbin, forty years of age, born in St. Petersburg, engineer . . . shot on such and such a day . . . buried with the others, without benefit of clergy, without rites, like a dog. Hide! He must hide himself, but where? In whose house? Most of his acquaintances had fled the country, some had fallen in the war. Others had " conformed ". It would not do to run up against *them*! One could not die twice. His brain was working now at high pressure. He did not notice that the dawn was breaking and a greenish light struggling through the dusk. Not till he met another sleigh and had to pull aside to let it pass did he attempt to take his bearings. The neighbourhood seemed to him familiar.

He brought the exhausted horse to a standstill. Where, where should he go? Once again he began hunting through his pockets. They were empty. Then his eyes fell on the sack that lay in the sleigh. He undid the string. Eight pairs of boots came into view, big ones and smaller ones, some of them spattered with blood. Michel Turbin wiped the spots from the leather

with a wisp of hay, and examined the soles. They were in good condition. He dropped the boots back into the sack and tied it up again. Then he mounted the sleigh again and drove on. He knew now where to go.

At the very hour when old Zukoff was swearing by all the saints that he had not stolen the boots, but that the ghost of the dead bourgeois had appeared to him suddenly and grabbed the sack with a spectral hand (which only the Lett believed, while Riwosch spat contemptuously) Michel Turbin reached the Rag Market.

He tied the reins to a lamp-post, threw a heap of hay on the ground before the horse, shouldered the sack and mingled with the thousands of peasants, soldiers, and dealers who even at this early hour filled the market-place with noisy chaffering. The goods lay on the ground. It looked as though the town had vomited all its rubbish, everything that had been rotting in its warehouses, mouldering in its cupboards, rusting in its cellars, every sort of broken, worn-out, useless object on to this spot. Amid the babel of voices and screeching of gramophones rang the curses of soldiers and the shrill whistling of street-urchins.

After a prolonged search Michel found an unoccupied space. He laid the eight pairs of boots on the ground and waited. There could not fail to be customers for them among the dense throng of people streaming past him. But all at once it occurred to him that he had no idea of the price he ought to ask. Hurriedly he filled the sack again and walked past the long row of dealers till he came upon an old Jew who also had boots for sale. He was a little lean man with a grey goat's beard; on his nose a pair of steel-rimmed spectacles sat precariously. His bloodless face was as yellow as parchment. He wore a moth-eaten fur coat, from which his neck protruded like that of an aged bird of prey.

"What price?" asked Turbin, pointing to a much-mended pair of shoes.

"Two thousand roubles!" croaked the old man. "Good solid stuff, too!"

"A thousand?" suggested Turbin.

" A thousand " repeated the Jew, throwing the boots down in a temper. " I pay a thousand myself."

Turbin put his hand into the sack and shoved a boot under the Jew's nose. The latter examined first the uppers, then the soles. Then he looked long and critically at Turbin through the dim glasses of his spectacles.

" Let's go away from here ", he said, and bundled his goods together.

They crossed the market-place. The streets were still dead and empty of traffic, the window-shutters all closed. From time to time the old man turned round as though afraid of losing his customer. In a narrow side street he opened the door of a tumble-down wooden house. A suffocating smell of drying hides met Turbin as they entered. They mounted the narrow staircase to the top story. The Jew opened the door of one of the attics under the roof and told Turbin to go in. The attic was crammed with hides, leather straps, kitchen utensils of all sorts, heaps of books, endless rubbish.

" Sit down ", said the dealer, and pointed to a mountain of old newspapers piled on the floor.

" Haven't you anything to smoke ? " asked Turbin.

The old man ferreted about under boxes and tins, till at last he found a dried-up cigar and handed it to Turbin. Then he examined one pair of boots after another with the utmost care. Turbin drew a couple of puffs, then he turned giddy. The attic began to rock, the heap of papers on which he sat rose and fell, the Jew disappeared somewhere in a fog. When he recovered consciousness, he saw the melancholy eyes of the old man fixed upon him, and felt the taste of brandy on his tongue.

" Are you better ? Would you like something to eat ? I've got a bit of cold horse-meat left . . . "

Turbin refused in a weak voice, and tried to rise. His legs were as heavy as lead.

" I'll give you ten thousand roubles. I can't do more. I've my profit to make, haven't I ? "

Turbin nodded dumbly. The dealer hesitated a moment ; then he fished out one of the dusty volumes, opened it, and took out the notes. Turbin put them in the breast pocket of his coat. The dead men's boots disappeared in the corner.

" Wait a moment ", said the Jew, and seated himself beside Turbin. He closed his eyes. His skinny fingers tugged at the sparse hairs of his beard. He swung his body to and fro as though in prayer.

" Have you any papers ? " he asked at last.

" No."

" Where will you go ? "

" I don't know."

The Jew nodded silently to himself. Outside, the street was beginning to wake up. Voices were heard.

" Can you play the foreigner ? " Turbin heard the old man whisper.

" The foreigner ? "

" Yes. Can you speak French, English, or any way the foreigners do ? "

" French, yes ", said Turbin, and hope flooded him like a hot wave. Play the foreigner ! The one way of escape for him !

The Jew scrutinized him closely, measured him from head to foot as though to imprint his features on his mind.

" French is good ", he said. " Like that you can be a man from Belgium—that's a long way off. Perhaps a man like that died a few weeks ago of typhus—no family, no one to bother about him ; they dragged him on a sledge outside the town and left him lying there. Perhaps. You never know. What will you pay for a real passport ? Can you bring real money ? Dollars ? "

Turbin was aghast. Dollars ! How was he to come by foreign money ?

" Bring me a hundred dollars, and I'll find you the passport. You can stick your photograph on it afterwards. You haven't got one ? There's a man in the market will do one for you. Come back to-morrow evening—but not before it's dark. Now I must go."

Michel Turbin had not the strength to refuse the offer outright. He had not the slightest hope of raising the dollars, but he stammered words of thanks and promised to come again the following evening.

" That's all right, that's all right ", said the old man depre-

catingly. "When you get out of this hell, you'll understand how often *we* have had to die—one gets used to it."

Michel Turbin went aimlessly through the streets. He repeated to himself the name of the street and the number of the house where the old Jew lived. He must on no account forget them. In a tavern, among carriers and peasants, he drank several glasses of hot tea. There was nothing to eat but little round cakes of coarse black meal, fried in linseed oil, The peasants were smoking odds and ends of tobacco that they rolled in pieces of newspaper. Thick clouds of blue smoke drifted through the room.

The buzz of voices, clink of glasses, soft singing of the samovar made him drowsy. He laid his arms on the table, his head sank lower and lower; sleep overcame him irresistibly. The landlord's voice startled him out of it. The tavern was empty.

"If you're drunk, you can have a bed upstairs. What will you pay?"

Michel Turbin named a sum in a thick voice. Leaning on the landlord's shoulder he dragged himself up a winding staircase. In a dark dungeon he dropped on to a bed. The landlord pulled off his boots for him.

Michel Turbin awoke in the dark. He lay there a long while cudgelling his brains, trying to remember where he was. By degrees the events of the last few days recurred to him. He sat up with difficulty. He had been sleeping fully dressed and in his overcoat, but his feet were icy cold. Where had his boots got to?

He felt his way to the door and opened it. A faint light fell into the room. A rusty iron bedstead, a dirty coverlet, a couple of broken chairs. How had he got here? From down below came the noise of the tavern parlour. Michel Turbin sat down on the bed. "Where does the old Jew live?" he thought, but he had forgotten the name of the street. He sat there motionless, trying to follow in his mind the route they had taken from the Rag Market.

A slight noise made him turn his head. Against the wall, in the half-light, he saw his boots. A mouse crept in and out of them, nibbled at the leather, stood on its hind legs and pulled

at the laces. Turbin watched it without stirring; but when the mouse began tearing at the lining, he started up with a hoarse cry.

"Something special! Something special! The money!" In a second he had scared the mouse away and shut the door. In the darkness he felt round the inner lining of the boots. It was there! He could feel them plainly under the linen, the dollars! They had shot him—and he was alive. They had robbed him—but not discovered his cache. Michel Turbin dropped on his knees and prayed. . .

The landlord gave him an evil look.

"You've been snoring here for two days. Look sharp and get out of it! I don't want the Cheka nosing round. . . "

Michel Turbin crumpled up a thousand-rouble note in his pocket and slid it into the man's hand. The latter opened his fist a little way, stared in amazement, and let Turbin out by the back door.

"God go with you, *Barin*", he whispered, and bowed low.

It was seven in the evening. Michel Turbin started in the direction of the Rag Market. Like a sleepwalker he went to the place where he had met the old Jew. Then he turned into a side street, without speaking, without hesitating, and found himself before the dark entry, whence the smell of drying hides assailed him.

The train which had been allotted to the Red Cross for the transport of foreigners had left Leningrad an hour ago. They were penned together in three cattle trucks with their wives and children: people of whom many did not know their own country. Now they were going as beggars to a strange fatherland. In the dim light of a smoking lantern they cowered among their handbags and bundles. The soldier on guard, leaning on his rifle, sang softly to himself. When he opened the sliding door of the truck, the icy wind blew the lantern out, and the travellers could take a peep at the starlit winter night. They avoided talking to one another. Fear of spies and the terrors of the bourgeois war had made them dumb. Only when one of the children whimpered in its sleep one heard the soothing whisper of a woman's voice.

The train stopped not far from the frontier at an abandoned station. The foreigners were to cross the frontier on foot. The trucks emptied themselves. Soldiers, led by a Kommissar, sorted the people into groups. Passports and baggage were once more examined. These were the same soldiers who a day or two earlier had shot the fugitive bourgeois.

The Kommissar read the names of the passengers from the list, and one after another they had to come forward to receive their papers. Behind the Kommissar stood the soldier Riwosch. He held a lantern in his hand, and as each terrified foreigner put out a trembling hand for his passport, he held the lantern high and lighted up his face. The Kommissar compared it once more with the photograph, then he shouted, " Next one ! "

Michel Turbin, a bundle under his arm, heard his false name called out : " Dupuis ! Belgium. . . ."

" Dupuis ! " repeated the Kommissar, and searched among the passports. The soldier Riwosch held the lantern up. Their eyes met. God of Righteousness ! It was *his* bourgeois ! They stared at one another transfixed.

" Next one ! " said the Kommissar. " Rogers ! England. . . " But Turbin did not move, and the soldier did not lower the lantern. Rogers the Englishman stepped forward, stood waiting.

" Go to the devil ! " yelled the Kommissar to Turbin, and as the latter walked slowly on, he heard him shouting to the soldier : " Idiot ! "

In those words lay the death of Turbin the Russian, and the hope of a new life for the Belgian Dupuis.

(*Translated by Violet Macdonald*)

THE FORTNIGHTLY LIBRARY

THE HISTORY OF JEWRY

By E. H. Carr.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE, by Cecil Roth. *Macmillan.* 18*s.*

THE EXPULSION OF THE JEWS FROM SPAIN, by Valeriu Marcu. *Constable.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Roth's substantial volume, though it contains 450 rather closely printed pages, really is a "short history", for it covers three thousand years and touches four continents. It is a commonplace, and almost an understatement, to say that the Jews present a phenomenon unparalleled in the history of the world. They have a record three times as long as that of any other people except the Chinese; a geographical distribution wider than that of any race save the Anglo-Saxon; and a unique persistence not only in their traditions and their characteristics, but in the reaction which they produce in other races among whom they live. The Jewish problem of today can be traced back in substantially the same form through the Middle Ages, and has its beginnings before the foundation of the Roman Empire.

The first dispersal of the Jews from Asia into Europe began during the Maccabean rebellions of the second century B.C. After the capture of Jerusalem the Jewish population of the Mediterranean was reinforced by tens (Mr. Roth says "hundreds") of thousands of Jewish slaves, many of whom in the course of time acquired their freedom. But the period was one of stability and prosperity; and the Jews, though there are many contemptuous references to them in later classical literature, escaped the persecution meted out to the Christians. It was when the persecuted Christians obtained the upper hand that, on the threshold of the Middle Ages, the long persecution of the Jews set in. It reached its height in the period of the Crusades, when religious passions were stimulated on a scale and to a degree of intensity unknown in the world either before or since; and its horrors and brutalities have not been adequately taken into account by that school of modern historians which has set out to rehabilitate the Dark Ages.

One of the most harrowing episodes of this mediæval persecution—the Inquisition and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella—forms the subject of Mr. Marcu's short sketch. Mr. Marcu is vivid, emotional and picturesque, where Mr. Roth prefers to be dry and matter-of-fact. The ultimate importance of this episode is that the Jews were on this occasion persecuted for the first time on national, and not purely on religious, grounds—in the interest, not of religious orthodoxy, but of racial purity. The blow therefore fell with equal, or even greater, force on Jewish converts to Christianity. "The search for impure blood grew into a mania; and the most esteemed persons were the State-appointed informers." But the ghetto system which, begin-

ning in Italy, spread all over mediæval Europe wherever Jewish communities existed, was more decisive for Jewish history than isolated acts of persecution. It confirmed and established the position which the Jewish religion had already assigned to the Jews—the position of a peculiar people sundered by divine and human law from their fellow-men. They lived in a ghetto, separated by walls and gates from the rest of the city. They were compelled to wear a distinguishing mark, in some cases a coloured hat, in others a badge affixed to the outer garment—a "supreme indignity, which put Jews on the same footing as prostitutes". They were excluded from the municipal baths except, sometimes, on a specified day. They were forbidden to employ Christian servants. "A love-affair between a Jew and a Christian was regarded as a most serious offence, punishable by flogging, the galleys or worse." They were excluded from the liberal professions, and usually from all forms of commerce except money-lending and dealing in second-hand articles.

One result of this system was to make the ghetto a sort of state within the state. The ghetto administration, with the Rabbi at its head, made rules, levied taxes and, though without any other means of compulsion than excommunication and ostracism, performed all the functions of an autonomous municipal government. This was a convenience for the national or city authorities, who could thus deal with the Jewish community as a whole instead of with individual Jews. It was also more than a convenience, it was a refuge from persecution, for the Jews themselves; and in some places the anniversary of the establishment of the ghetto was, for all its humiliations, celebrated by the Jewish community as an occasion for rejoicing. On this basis, degrading but yet tolerable, a compromise between Jew and Christian had been reached almost everywhere by the sixteenth or seventeenth century.

It was not until the latter half of the eighteenth century that the ghetto wall at last began to crumble. (The final demise of the ghetto came a century later still.) Ever since the Renaissance, kings and ministers and even generals had come to find the Jewish financier or the Jewish factotum indispensable to their comfort and their efficiency; and the *Hofjude*, or "Court Jew," became a familiar and privileged figure not only in all the little German states, but everywhere in Europe. The rationalism of the eighteenth century made religious conflicts and religious intolerance definitely obsolete. The Jews could not be denied the benefits of the theory of the Rights of Man or of the revolutionary slogans of Equality and Fraternity; and when national armies grew up all over the continent, Jews were not exempted from the conscription. All these factors combined with the wave of economic expansion to break down the ancient barrier between Jew and Gentile. Mr. Roth takes "the magic year 1870" as the high water mark of Jewish emancipation and equality. In the later 'seventies, the seed of modern anti-Semitism was sown in Germany. It spread through Austria to Russia (where the first pogrom of the modern age took place after the assassination of Alexander II in 1881) and to France (the Dreyfus case). Since then, save for a certain relaxation during and immediately after the war, anti-Semitism has been continually growing over the greater part of Europe and in the United States of America.

The changed conditions of the nineteenth century confronted Judaism itself with new problems. Nationalism had taken the place of religion as the force most liable to inflame men's political passions. The way out for the Jew who wished to reconcile himself with his

eighbours was therefore no longer con-ersion but assimilation. Judaism was plit into two camps, the Nationalists and he Assimilationists, the former some-imes appearing to despise the latter lmost as much as the Orthodox Jew of he Middle Ages despised the convert. But the rise of Nationalism had another emarkable repercussion. It gave the ew a desire for a visible symbol, not of is religion, but of his nationality. The Zionist movement, which was anathema o the Assimilationists (who believed that t would provoke and encourage anti-Semitism), was the outcome of this onging; and in 1917 the "Balfour leclaration" promised Palestine to the Jews as a "national home" under British patronage. Jerusalem which, in Mr. Marcu's words, "has played an in-comparably larger role as a lonely Wailing Wall than as the capital of an ndependent kingdom", became once nore, after two thousand years, the political metropolis of Judaism. It is he latest tribute to the persistence of the Jewish spirit.

Only here and there does Mr. Roth's horough and scholarly history call for a word of minor criticism. It is surely an exaggeration to suggest that even now Hebrew has made any serious progress as "the lingua franca of the Diaspora". The autonomous Jewish republic in Siberia, here referred to as a "hope", has been in existence for several years, though it is extremely hard to get reliable nformation about its progress. Social anti-Semitism was rife in the United States even before the war. More im-portant, one would have liked to have had a fuller analysis of the causes, in par-icular the economic causes, of the re-current waves of anti-Semitism which have swept Europe for 1,500 years and which seem to follow certain more or less constant laws. But one cannot have everything in a short history; and on the actual side Mr. Roth has given full measure.

POETS AND PROPHETS, by André Maurois. *Cassell.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

THE poets and prophets of M. André Maurois' new book are figures which have been so much discussed by English critics in similar volumes, that one despairs at a repetition of the familiar exposé, the inevitable, conventional criticisms. Kipling, Shaw, Chesterton, Wells, Conrad, Lawrence, Lytton Strachey, Katherine Mansfield—what more can be said about them than has already been said? And particularly in a collection of lectures to French audiences, who desire, as we always do when foreign authors are concerned, chiefly information. Once again it will be brought home to the expectant reader that the only tolerable criticism of such well-worn figures is that of a new generation, unsympathetic to its mentors or at least reacting from them. A mere exposition of writers, however illuminating, may inform the public, but has no value as criticism.

M. André Maurois probably would not make this claim for his intelligent but exceedingly cautious and conventional book. Kipling and Conrad seem to be the most favourably received and this is natural. The stress on loyalty, order, discipline and empire in Kipling has been attractive to the empire-building Frenchman, who is further allured by the combination of an exotic scene with his peculiar brutal and morbid pessimism. It is odd that the people who called Hardy pessimistic should have closed their eyes to the same characteristic in their Anglo-Indian idol. The moral problems of honour propounded with such intellectual elaboration by Conrad, so that the sea ceases to be water and becomes a spiritual laboratory, appeals also to the Frenchman's love of the intellectual for its own sake. Wells is admired for his scientific fantasies. The exotic in Lawrence, in spite of his callowness—from the French point of view—

about sex, has its own attraction, and while a Frenchman is pained by the feuilleton puritanism of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, he is excited by the sinister, dark self talk in the Mexican books. In so far as any English writer can be translated into a movement or a doctrine, he will be taken seriously in France and M. Maurois has been careful to stress this aspect of his subjects, after a brief and sometimes telling biographical sketch. In writing upon the mysticism of Katherine Mansfield he seems to carry the method to the point of exaggeration. The undoubted exception to French favour is Shaw. That complete and perfect puritan, who had the effrontery to describe woman as an economic and scientific manifestation of the life force at work, the gallantry of the French nation could accept on no terms whatever. M. Maurois expounds him fairly and patiently, but the Fabians have never thrived outside the mild English climate.

The main framework of these essays is the view that the nineteenth century ended with the withering of the hopes successfully raised by the industrial revolution, science, overseas trade and liberalism. The older of the writers discussed came forward with new doctrines for the renovation of society. Conrad the foreigner and convinced reactionary in politics stands alone. But the war revealed these prophets as being isolated in late Victorian and Edwardian security, with a message suitable and salutary to such times, and one utterly unsuited in climate and temper to the post-war situation. Lytton Strachey—obviously admired by a fellow feline in biography—belonged really to the pre-war period, though he caught the temper of the twenties. M. Maurois might have stressed the ardent liberal passion which lies hidden beneath his " detachment."

M. Maurois' chief gift is for graceful portraiture, and for a deferential sympathy which identifies him for the time being very closely with his subject. He does not take us into the laboratory like Taine, but gracefully encourages us to speak for ourselves. He is self-effacing at the right moments and the explanation of those weird creatures, the English, has become his passion. It is gratifying to have our writers so conscientiously, skilfully and graciously explained; and yet explanation has always left the English uncomfortable and vaguely dissatisfied. It is their own aim in life to attain to a perfect, almost god-like complacency, and for this reason they have preferred always to be attacked. M. Maurois flatters us by expounding us; will he now not start attacking us and so allow us that longed for pleasure—the most English pleasure of silently flattering ourselves?

V. S. PRITCHETT.

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VICTORIA REGINA

By Arthur Waugh.

VICTORIA OF ENGLAND, by Edith Sitwell. *Faber & Faber.* 15*s.*

Authority may forget a dying King; but it is often eager enough to protect his memory after death. A few months after Queen Victoria died, there appeared in one of the quarterly reviews an obituary estimate of a strictly respectful but rather audaciously critical temper. It made public certain stories of the Queen's reign which had hitherto been held inviolate in her immediate entourage, and King Edward VII was extremely annoyed by the indiscretion. It was even rumoured that at least one illustrious lady was visited by the full penalty of his disapproval, being suspected of having whispered secrets. And yet the article was essentially blameless; its only offence was that it represented the late Queen as a human being, with human qualities and foibles. The fierce light which beats upon a throne had come into conflict with the divinity which hedges a king. That was all.

Some five and thirty years have passed since then, and Queen Victoria has been subjected to much keen question and analysis. She emerges from the ordeal with all the honours of her womanhood unclouded; her faults of temperament and temper only serve to bring her a little nearer to her people's understanding. And of all her portraits none surpasses Miss Edith Sitwell's in intimacy and insight. After all, it needs a woman to understand a woman; and to the sympathy of sex Miss Sitwell adds the interpretation of the poet. The setting of her portrait is often exquisite; the poet's touch lifts it continually into the realm of art. On the very first page the picture of Sidmouth in a chilly January dawn; a little further on, in Kensington Palace garden on a May morning; in the portrait of the young Queen "with the beauty of a swan, the melancholy grace and splendour of a cloud, with the pride and pomp of a wave marching"—in passages like these we are aware of the fancy of the poet transmuting her material into gold. Yet all the while the natural femininity of the artist keeps peeping out in little touches of observation—the darned muslin of the child's frock, the white silk pelisse and swansdown trimming of the bride's trousseau—the frills and furbelows of Victorian decoration. But these, it may be objected, are the superficialities of workmanship. Well, then, let it be added that the poet's native sense of beauty, and the woman's intuitive insight into character penetrate into the very heart of the interpretation. Here, one feels, is a portrait that will stand, when the mists of gossip and speculation have melted away.

Victoria is revealed, always with kindliness and sympathy, and yet with no vain indulgence of her weaknesses, as a woman "conceived, born and bred to be a queen"; little in body, but great in heart; from her nursery the bondwoman of destiny. "Intensely malleable as to moods, but never as to deeds", she knew what was her own, and guarded it jealously. "You must not touch these; they are mine", she said to a playfellow who stretched out a hand to her toys. It was the same woman, responding to the same impulse, who obstinately refused to have the Ladies of her Bedchamber changed with the change of governments.

Miss Sitwell is particularly happy in her picture of the young Queen's relations to her counsellors; they passed, one by one—Uncle Leopold, Baroness Lehzen, Lord Melbourne, Disraeli—each had a time of unchallenged authority, during which he or she could do no wrong. Then the kaleidoscope turned, and the pattern changed. For all her narrowness and spite, it is difficult not to be sorry for Lehzen, when her long reign ends; difficult to forgive the chilly and formal regret with which the Queen at last heard of her death. "After I came to the throne, she got to be rather trying, and especially so after my marriage, but never from any evil intention. . . ." It is a poor tribute to a life's devotion.

The Prince Consort, however, retained his wife's heart alike in life and death; when once he had established himself, there was "no room for any other influence". Miss Sitwell deals sympathetically and shrewdly with the difficulties of Prince Albert's position. At the beginning, his lot was far from enviable; and, though he may have found his share of happiness in his wife's love, and in the company of his children, he continued all his life the slave and the victim of Duty. But the Queen idolized him, and cherished his memory, so that the clever, super-courteous Disraeli soon appreciated that, if he was to live down his Sovereign's first instinctive dislike of him, his trump card must be praise of the dead Prince. So he grew eloquent in eulogy, extolling the Prince's manly grace, his sublime simplicity, his union of "chivalry with the intellectual splendour of the Attic Academe". At first, it may have been a device like any other; but in time it yielded to sincerer emotions. If he played upon her feelings, he gave her new confidence and interest in life. He aroused her from the melancholy of widowhood. In Miss Sitwell's own words:

> "He loved her because of her great nature, because of her wise heart, her eagle's view, the glamour that surrounded her, the incredible majesty and splendour of her walk, her natural love for her people. In return she gave him a noble friendship."

So the pageant passes—"ghosts crumbling away into a little dust in the happy sunlight"; and all the while, like a thundercloud in the summer distance, the great Industrial Revolution was slowly sweeping up to its triumph. Miss Sitwell premises that her book does not attempt to deal with politics, but it most certainly does not miss a political, or at any rate a social atmosphere. The chapters labelled "Early Days" and "March Past", indicate with rare imaginative power the stealthy rise of the middle class, the cry of the workers, and the fœtid mass of suffering and wrong upon which the commercial prosperity of the Victorian era erected its bulwarks. Victoria lived to see the worst of those evils reformed, but even her "eagle eye" could never have imagined one tithe of the changes her England was to see in the years that followed. Perhaps she was happy in the moment of her death. At least, it is good to think so.

THE ARYAN PATH

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TO STAND ASIDE AND GAZE

By Naomi Mitchison.

QUESTIONS OF OUR DAY, by Havelock Ellis. *The Bodley Head.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

It must be an inspiration to a man like Havelock Ellis to realize that humanity has been benefited by one's life and work, to know that one has helped to set free and make happy thousands of individual men and women. One can publish a volume of a hundred tiny essays, such as this, with the knowledge that they are a gentle pushing forward towards that fundamental decency and kindliness which they all postulate as the Good. For many years Havelock Ellis has had to be a fighter, as all original thinkers, whose thinking deals with social problems, are bound to be in society as it is; nowadays it would take more than a bench of bishops to stop the ordinary, intelligent man or woman from giving him his due as one of the most obvious great leaders and helpers of our time. He has arrived at an old age whose quality must be judged by his own essay on its coming: "THE BURDEN FALLS AWAY". Or, as he says at the end of his essay on the present Age of Faith: "I stand aside and gaze".

That is the key-note of these essays on the many problems which beset us all, and especially the young, problems for the most part of personal conduct. And yet it is a standing aside which is helpful, as though the secure gazer were always willing to lend a hand. Most of the essays are inspired by correspondents, and the quotations from letters are in themselves extremely interesting, coming as they do from all over Western Europe and America, often from women; one of the letter-writers is a working-man, a great reader, as most upper-grade industrial workers are when they get the chance. These letters show hopes and fears and depressions, and most of them end with that fierce modern question-mark, which our various faiths—political mostly—try to assuage. And there is always something helpful to be said, on marriage, education, leisure, crime, queerness, religion, kissing, America—and so on. Sometimes there is literary criticism, and there are one or two biographical notes, as in the little essay on Freud, which, again, begins with a fascinating quotation from a correspondent. One of the most charming pieces of writing deals with the Art of Cooking.

Many of the writers are young, and some of them, perhaps, may be a little cross with Havelock Ellis for refusing to allow certain assumptions into his field of thought. The word "commufascism," which he seems to find pleasure in using, is not worthy of him, and I am afraid it is rather a symptom of having taken the Wells-Stalin argument as the very last word on the subject of the U.S.S.R. and its political philosophy. No doubt poor Marx had his neuroses, but there is more to him than that! I take it that Havelock Ellis has spent most of his life in dealing with personal problems, mostly on the psycho-physical plane, and mostly among the upper and lower middle classes; the economic problem has not faced him at its most acute, and he feels it can, very largely, be disregarded, although this does not stop him from doing some excellent, sane thinking about some of the subsidiary problems arising from it. However, he

has, at any rate, the biologist's point of view—he does not consider us politicians quite as silly as some of the physicists do!

But I think the main point of *Questions of Our Day* is the insistence on good personal relationships between individuals and on all matters which bear upon good relationships. It is quite plain that, personally he has established good relationships with an enormously varied field of persons; he has cast down barriers right and left, and, no doubt, those who have the luck to be friends with Havelock Ellis are all the better friends for the rest of the world. He wants to see these good individual situations made possible everywhere and for everyone, and he hates all tyrannies, in this country and elsewhere, which put barriers between the possibilities of friendship; the barriers which he perhaps sees most clearly are the barriers of sex repression and ignorance, especially biological ignorance—one of his most practical essays is that on the teaching of biology to young children—and surely he has done more than almost any other one person to break these particular barriers down. This volume should help with that good work, not only for what it says, but for the manner of saying. Not all scientists are graceful writers who can handle the English language and make quite difficult things sound acceptable!

WORDS FOR TO-NIGHT, by George Buchanan. *Constable.* 5*s.*

Mr. Buchanan continues in this volume the diary he published three or four years ago under the title of *Passage Through the Present.* Readers of that book will recall that he was not concerned only with public events seen from the point of view of the man in the bus, but he went about his daily way in London noting oddities, looking for those things which had contemporary significance, observing people in a line or a paragraph, recording pregnant phrases from his reading and showing an alert concern for those things in urban life which disturb the intelligent man or give him a small measure of hope in a civilization in which he commonly sees little to please. Thus an analysis of the Press and the B.B.C., a few notes on modern poetry, give Mr. Buchanan opportunities to show a severely cautious but earnest faith in the future of these things. Earnestness, gentleness a little feline, a sharp moralising eye, a tongue sometimes almost piously epigrammatic, are his characteristics; simplicity, sometimes rather consciously sought, is his aim; a soft irony, rather than open attack or satire, is his tool.

A notebook, by the striking brevity of its entries, stimulates as much to disagreement as agreement. Who, I wonder, for example, ever described the Irish character as "weak"? I should like to hear less talk about the wickedness of living in the country or of going abroad on parties of exploration. What is the adventure of modern industrial life, shop life, office life—where the special virtue of it? Some of the entries are trite. Here again the diarist has put down a conclusion where the interesting thing is the path which led to the conclusion.

These sins are forgivable because of the liveliness and variety of Mr. Buchanan's record. He hears the Budget read, he wanders through the streets among the Jubilee crowds, he sees Charlie Chaplin, notes how people receive the war news, he invents an excellent summary of the probable behaviour of his friends if war is declared. He catches the chief glint of our printable daily behaviour. He is very seriously and earnestly concerned with a full moral life. On every page there is something worth reflecting upon. N. R. Liss.

THE GERMAN LAWRENCE

By KENNETH WILLIAMS.

WASSMUSS, by Christopher Sykes. *Longmans.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

THE son of the late Sir Mark Sykes, that brilliant generaliser to whose influence on the British War Cabinet the Middle East owes at least some of its confusion to-day, has taken for the "hero" of his book one of whom scarcely an Englishman outside that select circle who know their Middle East has heard. The German Wassmuss was unquestionably a remarkable man, whose soul found affinity in one of the dismalest spots on the earth's surface, the hinterland of Bushire, in Southern Persia. He has indeed been called "the German Lawrence," but that is a journalistic description which misses accuracy by a considerable margin.

It is true that Wassmuss knew Southern Persia before the War—he was Consul at Bushire—just as Lawrence knew Arabia before the War; it is true that, during the War itself, he endeavoured to stir up the fickle Persian tribesmen against the British, just as Lawrence stirred up the Arab tribes against the Turks; it is true that, after the War, he was put in charge of the Eastern Department of the German Foreign Office, just as Lawrence was put in charge of the Middle Eastern section of the Colonial Office; and it is true that, after that, he went back to live in Southern Persia just as Lawrence often remarked that he felt sometimes like returning to the land of his exploits to lead the simple life of the tribesmen with whom he had fought.

But there the parallel virtually ends. Wassmuss was set the impossible task of raising a *Jehad,* or Holy War, against the Allies in the Middle East, and strenuously though he and a few extraordinarily courageous Germans strove to set Persia and Afghanistan in flames against the British, they never really had a dog's chance. Mr. Sykes claims that Wassmuss was largely responsible for the British disaster at Kut, but the evidence adduced in support is not very convincing. The utmost that Wassmuss could do, by means of his dominating personality over simple tribesmen—and it is to be remembered that he at no time had anything like the money which was at Lawrence's disposal—was to keep Southern Persia in effervescence against the British, who, in consequence of the 1907 Agreement which divided Persia into respectively Russian and British spheres of influence, held it in fee. His ultimate failure was no discredit; it was but the inevitable result of playing a lone hand with poor material.

It is likely there will long be controversy on the real character of the man who both before and during the War did his best to thwart British hegemony in the region of the Persian Gulf, and who afterwards returned to his haunts in order to pay back the debts which he had incurred and which his own Government could not be induced to redeem. In Iran to-day you may hear a score of different opinions, but Mr. Sykes, by travelling in Tangsir and Dashtstan, has satisfied himself that Wassmuss was truly beloved of the tribesmen, and that "the Wassmuss legend" still has potency.

It is a moving, picturesque story that

has been made out of this romantic, conscience-ridden German Consul. On his own experiences of the land in which Wassmuss moved Mr. Sykes draws freely, and some of his descriptive passages, alike in their sensibility, their pungency, and their humour, recall the best things in his father's works. He has drawn his portrait on a very wide canvass, not always troubling to keep Wassmuss in the centre of the picture; yet his digressions, numerous though they are, are always stimulating, and contain much individuality and courage in expression.

Whatever history makes of Wassmuss, Mr. Sykes has made on extremely readable book of him. He can be blunt and polished, mordant and sympathetic, frivolous and serene, and he does not disdain the purple patch. To the varied splendours of Iran his own varied style is admirably suited: if he never returns to that inaccessible land, he has extracted for us already some of its peerless charm.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND THE RULE OF LAW, 1918-1935. by Sir Alfred Zimmern. *Macmillan.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

WRITING under the impact of Italy's blunt rejection of any social obligation to the existing community of nations Sir Alfred Zimmern is moved to observe that "the first and major function of the League is to eliminate once and for all the fear of war". Yet most of his new book, cogent and brilliantly-phrased like everything he writes, is given up to explaining that ordinary men and women have pitched their hopes too high, that "Geneva" is no more than an instrument of co-operation between sovereign States, only differing from previous consortia of Powers by that "impalpable something communicated by the will of the peoples". Not the superseding of power-politics, then, but the evocation of a *will to co-operate*, i.e. the establishment of an international social consciousness, is the task of the immediate future.

The author's purpose is to place the League in historical perspective. In Part I we have a survey of the pre-1914 system of intercourse. Because of the root fact of conflicting policies of power the limit of inter-State co-operation was the occasional diplomatic conference, except in respect of purely non-controversial matters of administration. Of the latter the Universal Postal Union, with its secretariat and permanent organ, was the prototype.

For "The Elements of the Covenant", the theme of Part II, we are referred, first, to the practice of war-time political and economic collaboration, then to sundry unofficial schemes for a League of Nations and a hitherto unpublished Foreign Office Memorandum of November, 1918, and finally to the various official projects tabled in Paris. The Italian scheme, brushed aside somewhat unceremoniously, is particularly interesting, in the light of recent events. Drafted no doubt by the master hand of the late Signor Scialoja, its distinctive feature was the provision of an international equity council as a *guarantee* of "the necessary conditions of independent and autonomous development of every Member . . ."; while at the same time it made ample provision for sanctions, no less than seventeen varieties being enumerated! Among the fundamental principles for such a guarantee is "the international distribution of the foodstuffs and raw materials required to sustain healthy conditions of life and industry". We know that Italian delegates returned to the charge in the early sessions of the League. But the possessing Powers turned a deaf ear.

Perhaps the most notable feature here is the record of a House of Lords debate on March 19th, 1918, in which the late Lord Parker (a Lord of Appeal),

while opposing schemes such as that of Taft as being based upon a *simpliste*, if not false, analogy between municipal and international law, insisted that the community of States might straightaway evolve a reign of law on the basis of the "hue and cry" expedient familiar to English history. The first American draft of the Covenant took up this conception in a phrase which is reproduced in essence in Article XI of the present Covenant. (Article XVI, by contrast, is either an old-style alliance of Powers or a travesty.) It requires, however, in the words of a letter from Senator Elihu Root to Colonel House (August, 1918):

> "a limitation of sovereignty making every sovereign State subject to the superior right of a community of sovereign States to have the peace preserved . . ."

Alas! this clear principle was replaced, in Paris in 1919, by the British idea that it was premature to establish any overriding authority, that the League should be regarded rather as "an agency not for the restraint of crime but for the gradual formation of law-abiding habits". Sir Alfred Zimmern declares that the aim of the League, in our time, had to be "to make the practice of Foreign Offices safe for the world". In practice it has been construed as being to make the world safe for Foreign Offices! What he overlooks surely is that "public opinion" i.e. the common sense of ordinary men and women, whatever their national differences—apart from any nuisance value—does here and now furnish a solid basis for the erection of institutions proper to a rule of law: whereas any assemblage of official national representatives is, in the nature of things, non-co-operative, "a meeting of attorneys, each conscious of a separate purpose, their obligation towards their client"—in his own words.

W. Horsfall Carter.

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TWELVE NOON, by Richard Church. *Dent.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

In his new collection of poems, which contains some of the best and subtlest things he has written, Mr. Church shows himself to be bitterly conscious of belonging to what he calls "the middle generation". If this were merely a personal and self-regarding bitterness it would invite no comment. But it is something more, or other, than that: the emotion is universalized, and the rhetoric of disillusion rises to the status of that "criticism of life" which Matthew Arnold looked for in literature. On further reflection I wonder whether bitterness is the right word in this connection, for Mr. Church's mood varies between a nostalgia for youth and a philosophical acquiescence in its having in some degree vanished. In some degree only: for the periods into which we divide a man's life are arbitrary and largely conventional. "It is time for us, the middle generation, to stop singing", says Mr. Church. But here, surely, he is dramatizing a mood, not expressing a conviction; for the quality of his book is itself a disproof of the statement. No doubt it is a sign of grace in him that he is ready to give way to the younger generation of poets, to greet them with true Chinese politeness as his elder brothers, and to say in effect: No doubt but ye are the poets, and wisdom shall die with you. But politeness can be carried too far, and he is perhaps the victim of a romantic superstition in his readiness to accept youth at precisely its own valuation. "We are dumb creatures who deserve veneration", he remarks. And he goes on to say:

> But the younger men coming, with proud, hard voices
> Untainted by war, we cannot expect them
> To pity the broken music within our breasts.
> Why should we hinder the new-comer who rejoices
> Over his new world, which he and his friends are raising
> On the ruins we made?

But in cold fact Mr. Church and his generation are the inheritors not the makers of a ruined world; and what the younger men are going to do about it remains to be seen.

However this may be, it is not to be disputed, except by such critics as Dr. Leavis (with whom it is a pleasure to disagree), that Mr. Church is one of the most sensitive and searching of living poets. For the extremists of either camp, for those who demand that all poetry must sound like Tennyson and for those others who think poetry was invented in the nineteen thirties, his verse can have no appeal; for its peculiar distinction, from a technical point of view, is that it harmoniously combines elements of the central (and imperishable) English tradition with novelties of idiom and cadence charactertistic of the modern temper. He is a liberal-conservative poet: a man of his own times but, unlike some of his younger contemporaries, a man not unmindful of the fact that poetry had been written before him, and even before Mr. Eliot. Not everything in his new volume is worth its place, but it contains a substantial body of distinguished work which at any time less coterie-ridden than ours would be sure of a warm and a wide recognition. Here, one out of many, is an example of his unobtrusive technical skill, his command of cadence, his power of quickening traditional metre with a highly individual accentuation:

> At Michaelmas the purple daisy-dust
> Shakes in the mist and falls heavy with rain.
> We have had enough of apples and grain,
> Great ricks and threshing, hedge-cider and crust.
> Our muscles ache; we have survived the lust
> Of the sun, stirring in artery and vein

Madness and longing. Autumn has come again,
And the old earth turns over, smelling of must.

Into gloom she rolls, but we, being more
Than her creatures, look to another fire,
Another summoning of blood. Desire
Still burns within us, mounting to the mind.
That is light which was but heat before,
And we hear music in the leaf-strown wind.

In the penultimate line of this memorable sonnet the poet provides an answer and a corrective to his own premature misgivings. That being light which was but heat before, it is time for him, not to stop singing, but to sing with a new confidence.

GERALD BULLETT.

MY COUNTRY AND MY PEOPLE, by Lin Yu-tang. *Heinemann.* 15*s.*

THE charm of this book can hardly be exaggerated. Dr. Lin belongs to that little band of modern scholars like Dr. Hu Shih and the late Dr. C. C. Wu, who combine the widest knowledge of both Chinese and Western literature. He writes beautiful English (with the one exception of using the ugly Americanism "back of" for behind), has keen powers of observation and a delightfully caustic wit—sometimes, perhaps, too caustic, for surely the New Life Movement is worthy of less flippant treatment.

Withal he gives us a picture of the Chinese people with all their virtues, failings and essential lovableness, unequalled by any other writer.

Dr. Lin tells us that the Chinese mind is akin to the feminine in many respects:

> The qualities of the feminine intelligence and feminine logic are exactly the qualities of the Chinese mind. The Chinese head, like the feminine head, is full of common sense. It is shy of abstract terms, like women's speech. The Chinese way of thinking is synthetic, concrete, and revels in proverbs, like a woman's speech. Women have a surer instinct of life than men and the Chinese have it more than other people.

On the other hand the best qualities in the Chinese character are too often the indirect cause of China's continual misfortunes. That "mellow understanding of life and of human nature," which Dr. Lin justly claims as "the Chinese ideal of character," easily degenerates into ironic acceptance of things as they are, which Dr. Lin defines as "old roguery": like Mr. Utterson in Stevenson's fable, the cultured Chinese is over-prone to "let his brother go to the devil in his own way." And patience and endurance, working against idealism and action, end in exasperating submissiveness to gross social and political wrongs. Inspired by the lofty teaching of their philosophers, the Chinese "instead of a government by law have always accepted a government by 'gentlemen'"—under the pathetic delusion that "there are enough gentlemen to go round". The result is that there

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are only two classes in China, the yamên (*i.e.*, corrupt official) class perpetually filling its pockets at the expense of the non-yamên class.

The truth about the Chinese, as the exhibition at Burlington House so strikingly showed, is that they are first and foremost a poetic race actuated by a continual passion for beauty, which their philosophy has translated into certain clearly defined rules for attaining beauty in the inward life. The "superior man," master of his own soul, can afford to be indifferent to affairs of State, and, enabled by his training to extract the utmost beauty from his surroundings, is contented with a simplicity of life which is always the wonder and may well be the envy of the restless West.

On this side of the Chinese character Dr. Lin writes most fascinatingly, particularly in his account of Chinese poetry, too little known to the West. Even in translation some of the lyrics he quotes are exquisite. His account of the Chinese novel is also very interesting. It is curious to note that Chinese scholars were ashamed to put their names to a novel, just as Bacon, if he really did write Shakespeare's plays, could only do so under an alias.

Dr. Lin points out that "politically China has perished many times at the hands of outside conquerors" yet in the end has always triumphed over them. Today the invasion is less physical than mental, and the problem is still to see how China will combine what she requires of the West with her native culture. Mrs. Pearl Buck in the preface says that "one of the most important movements in China today is the discovery of their own country by young Chinese intellectuals". They are, in fact, going back to the wisdom of their fathers, as has happened many times in China's history, and always with the same result of national renascence.

O. M. GREEN.

GENERAL SMUTS. Vol. I. by Sarah Gertrude Millin. *Faber & Faber.* 18s.

MRS. MILLIN has written a biological study of General Smuts, which may be taken as authoritative regarding facts, for it has been submitted to the General himself, but is none the less a live individual work of art, written with a free pen — admirably readable, and generously balanced justice is done not only to Rhodes, another of Mrs. Millin's heroes, who was also at the beginning a hero to Smuts, and never ceased to affect his mind, but also to Milner, Smuts's bitterest opponent and, not less, to General Sir William Butler, the British officer who did his utmost to prevent the War. Justice is done to Botha—though perhaps here the appreciation is less full; and why does Mrs. Millin say that Botha looked like a Maharajah? He looked exactly like a Rembrandt portrait, of the darker type. Smuts, it seems, when he went to The Hague, thought how like he himself was to the men whom Franz Hals painted. That did not strike me. The visual impression of General Smuts that I preserve is significant for a contrast. In 1917 both Houses of Parliament entertained him, and in the chair was Lord French of Ypres—a little thick man, not distinguished in physical appearance, but in full dress uniform, plastered over with row upon row of decorations. Distinguished or not, Lord French looked a pleasant type of the professional soldier, full of *bonhomie* and enjoyment of living. Beside him was the austere figure of a professional student—in plain khaki, with only a brigadier's tabs and just one ribbon—I think the Legion of Honour. Lord French, in proposing their guest's health, told a story of how by some miscarriage of a complicated operation he just missed capturing the much-wanted raider—General Smuts. The Dutchman, in replying, told how he once missed the

chance to hold up a train which carried the General opposing him — General French. But from this pleasant interchange, the student passed to the most lucid review of world politics to which I ever listened.

Mrs. Millin quotes in her book a letter from S. F. Oliver to Smuts explaining that he would have liked "to work with you, and under you. Intellect is a queer, tricky thing. Shrewd knowledge of the facts of life is apt to be a misleading thing. Imagination is a joy to its possessor, but ninety-nine times out of a hundred is a vain thing. Faith is too often a millstone rendering its holder immobile and drowning him in self-consciousness. But when you happen on a blend of all four, you get something worth having".

At the same time Oliver was writing his impressions to his brother, in letters that are now published: "Smuts is a wonderfully intelligent creature, and I should think really a very fine soldier. But somehow he belongs to a different race, and I don't think one would ever get to be quite on the same plane with him". Two months later when Smuts entered the War Cabinet, Oliver wrote: "So far as pure intellect goes, he is the superior of any member at present on it; and by intellect I don't mean merely the power of understanding what is written in scientific books, but that curious and most rare quality of seeing into the very heart of the subject, coupled with the further and still rarer quality of being able to state clearly what he has seen. . . . Just as a great artist cannot force himself to paint a bad picture, so Smuts cannot run contrary to the vision which his intellect shows him. The vision which he sees would be destroyed unless Germany is beaten: so that we may reckon on his most devoted services to beat her".

These passages make fine comment on Mrs. Millin's study.

STEPHEN GWYNN.

THE JACOBEAN DRAMA, by U. M. Ellis-Fermor. *Methuen.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

AN age of transition and disillusionment; of stale reaction after the heroism of a supreme national effort; of intellectual questioning and spiritual disgust tearing through the pattern of material prosperity; of old men dreaming dreams of past greatness and young men seeing visions of worldly advancement—such was the age of James I in England. At a distance and seen in the curious distorting mirror of "long-term" history, it is often undifferentiated from Elizabethan England, from which, in point of fact, it differs quite as much as does the unhappy post-War generation from the comfortable 'eighties. Shakespeare is always vaguely classified as "Elizabethan", despite the fact that all his greatest work is Jacobean. If "Hamlet" is perfect *fin de siècle*, the new age produced "Troilus" and "Timon" and "Lear" and, above all, "Measure for Measure", in which, as Miss Ellis-Fermor remarks in her brilliant study, "the lowest depths of Jacobean negation are touched". And, as Lytton Strachey reminded us long ago, the Jacobean Shakespeare's last word to his countrymen was Caliban.

If one were asked to select, from the welter of great literature which the age produced, the most perfect lyric expression of the Jacobean mood, it would be difficult to avoid choosing Fulke Greville's lines beginning:

> Oh wearisome Condition of Humanity!
> Borne under one Law, to another bound:
> Vainely begot, and yet forbidden vanity,
> Created sicke, commanded to be sound:

Miss Ellis-Fermor not only reminds us that these verses are the "Chorus Sacerdotum" from Greville's drama "Mustapha", but includes a short chapter on Greville in this work on the Jacobean

theatre—a proceeding which immediately confirmed one's belief that she is a critic worthy of the deepest respect, not only, or chiefly, by reason of her great academic knowledge (nearly every negligible critic has that, as a matter of course), but because of her sensitive intuition.

Greville disavowed association with the professional theatre of his day; he wrote only two dramas and, as they were intended for the study, even these lacked stagecraft: he was "difficult", both in thought and expression; and yet it was he who made "explicit statement both of the ideas themselves and of the conflict between them, which were characteristic of the thought of his contemporaries". And "in his dramas there is revealed not only a mind typical of its generation, bitterly at war with itself and deeply divided, but a group of ideas intimately connected with theirs, freely and explicitly set out".

With the other dramatists, Chapman, Marston, Ben Jonson, Middleton, Tourneur, Webster, Beaumont and Fletcher, Ford and Shakespeare himself, the author deals chapter by chapter. In the compass of a single book they have never been so well interpreted or so surely differentiated. On page after page the reader comes across such revealing judgments as this on Ford: "He destroys evil, not by showing us in triumph the partial survival of the good, as does Webster, but by an illumination, shared in a very different way by Shakespeare, that convinces us that evil never was. . . . We assist, in Ford's plays, at the conversion of the seven deadly sins, not at their overthrow".

And the general thesis is treated as skilfully as the particular playwrights, though the idea of the dominance of the "Machiavel" villain has already been popularized to a certain extent by Wyndham Lewis and T. S. Eliot.

HUGH ROSS WILLIAMSON.

THINGS ANCIENT AND MODERN, by C. A. Alington. *Longmans, Green.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

THE Dean of Durham has led a cloistered life. When he was a boy at Marlborough his one ambition was to be a Head Master. To Marlborough he returned after a brief sojourn at All Souls. In 1908 he succeeded Dr. Moss as Head Master of Shrewsbury. Eight years later he succeeded Dr. Edward Lyttelton, his brother-in-law, as Head Master of Eton. After more than sixteen years he succeeded a former Head Master of Harrow as the Dean of Durham. His has been a life of busied detachment, and his friends—men like A. C. Benson, Austen Leigh, Henry Luxmoore, Stuart Donaldson and Lionel Ford—lived in a world freed from the immersion of public affairs. One among them, Charles Gore, understood politics even when he despised them: the great Bishop "combined the traditions of old Whig families with the philosophy of Balliol", though "he prided himself on having outgrown them both". But it is not on the public life of Charles Gore that Dr. Alington prefers to dwell. What impressed him was the Bishop's "wonderful acquaintance with English literature and the geography of London. He was quite unable to believe that I did not know to whom all the great houses belonged, and it was a liberal education to walk the streets with him: we occasionally visited the Zoo, which, he used to say, tended to shatter his belief in a beneficent creator".

Because of this detachment one wonders why a Sunday newspaper agreed to serialize Dr. Alington's book. A former Dean of St. Paul's entered Fleet Street to demonstrate Dean Gaisford's belief that a knowledge of Greek can lead to positions of considerable emoluments. But Dr. Alington is no great theologian: he appears to have been the first clergyman to confess his dislike of William Sanday when he was lecturing on the Valentinians. Unlike

Dr. Inge, he is not a prince of stylists, though his knowledge of literature is deep, and he manages to sustain a tea-party charm—too light to be effectively magisterial or decanal—from cover to cover. And yet Dr. Inge was himself an Assistant Master at Eton. There he enjoyed to the full an environment in which English prose, English verse and even versification won a swift recognition, and if he came to regret that English Socialists and the English working-classes cannot be managed or punished so summarily as little boys at Eton, this knowledge barbed his style. Thus in introducing the former Head Master of Eton to his readers the Editor of a Sunday newspaper was scarcely the innovator he imagined himself to be.

Head Masterships have led frequently to Deaneries and Bishoprics. No one who recalls Tait or Temple of Rugby, Perceval of Clifton or, in the present century, Temple of Repton will readily denounce the conventional elevation. For all we know, Alington will go down in history as the last clerical Head Master of Eton. It is, perhaps, fitting that he should retire to a Deanery: for the modern Bishop is busied with diocesan affairs and has become part of the cumbrous centralization at Church House. One suspects—as George the Third said of Sydney Smith—that Dr. Alington "would never make a Bishop".

But Armitage Robinson of Wells, Ryle of Westminster, and Inge of St. Paul's helped to enhance the prestige of the modern Deanery, and Dr. Alington has no need to write slightingly of his last preferment. He lives in a city almost broken by a long depression. But the gay and detached humour of Eton has not deserted him, and he ends his book with a description of two distinguished generals who visited Durham Cathedral. As they left the tomb of the Venerable Bede, one of them whispered to the other: "But I always thought Adam Bede was a woman".

This book is not in the strictest sense an autobiography. It rambles on. We learn what Dr. Alington thinks about the teaching of Greek, Latin Prose and Algebra. The wit is rampant and the wisdom not obtrusive. It is, in brief, an engaging book. The pomposity, invariably associated with non-Etonian Head Masters, never appears, though one envies Dr. Alington for finding himself treated with great respect and deference by Lord Curzon. After all, Lord Nelson quailed when he met his former schoolmaster. If the book has an elusive and very attractive quality, we should remember that when an old Etonian complained that for the life of him he could not tell what he owed to Eton, a wise man—was it Dr. Warre?—replied: "No, and the beauty of it is, he never will".

J. R. GLORNEY BOLTON.

CHRISTIANITY, HISTORY AND CIVILIZATION, by Roger B. Lloyd. *Lovat Dickson & Thompson.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

THIS is an interesting, ably-written and discursive study designed to set forth the practical urgency of Christian ethics in the task of saving Civilization from disruption. The author's proposition is that Christianity is as necessary to Civilization as Civilization is to Christianity, because Christianity is now the guardian of all the virtues which pre-Christian civilizations manifested, and unless it can protect them they will die, like imperfectly budded shoots. The need for the proclamation and enactment of Christian principles is now greater than ever, since the world is not wanting in signs of the decay of Civilization. Mr. Lloyd is forthright about the necessity for the modern man. He must accept orthodox Christianity.

But is it easy to be a Christian? Is the enactment of Christian principles an easy matter, say, for the League of Nations? Mr. Lloyd sometimes writes as if to be a Christian were the simplest

and most natural thing in the world. He implies that we have only to accept a rational view of history, which " is either a valid interpretation of history, and, as such, Eternal Truth, or it is not true at all " : acknowledge that such evidence brings us to the region of the mysterious (which, by being mysterious is not subject to reason, but appreciable only by faith) : have faith in the mystery, and we are naturally and conclusively Christians. And he is in danger of suggesting that persons who resist this conclusion show that they love darkness rather than light.

The simplest answer to such assurance is that Christian saints have not found Christianity easy, and that St. Paul wrote voluminously to show that, so far from being natural, its acceptance meant a change in the individual that could only be typified by death and resurrection. In making his wide survey of Western Civilization and the history of Western nations, Mr. Lloyd is apt to forget this aspect of the truth. He fails to make allowance for those to whom the dogmas of Christianity are totally ineffective as statements of historic fact, and who—if they are to appreciate Christianity and see it as a projection of spiritual truth—will have to prove that truth upon their pulses and discover its validity by their own painful experience.

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If this is true of individuals, it will be found true of nations. Christianity, of a kind, comes naturally to the Latin races : the Italians are Catholics, and their religion is more stable and assured than their civilization. Russians, on the other hand, are nominally Atheists. Nevertheless, Dostoievsky is as truly national, and as profoundly concerned about God, as Dante ; and the fact that Russia has always been in labour for religion, while Italy has accepted it in her stride, does not prove that Italy has a natural love of truth and aptitude for Civilization, and that Russia is possessed by the Devil.

Mr. Lloyd's thesis is that the great civilizations of the past collapsed because, while accepting the virtues of Reason, Beauty and Tolerance as cardinal necessities of Civilization, they failed to admit dependence upon a fourth : Goodness. Goodness he identifies with Love, Love with the person of Christ, and Christ with the virtue of self-sacrifice ; and by these equations he goes on to prove that the only stable civilization must be one based upon orthodox Christianity, which is the demonstration of self-sacrificing love. Of course the fulfilment which Mr. Lloyd thus presents is one which will commend itself to the hearts and minds of many ; but the rapidity with which he transforms a moral virtue into a specific of Christian revelation almost amounts to sleight of hand. " Goodness," and the knowledge and love of God are not identical in any experiencing mind, and this easy equation of them lays the author open to the charge of superficiality. Such identification Jesus himself resisted when he enquired : " Why callest thou me good ? " And it may be confidently affirmed that he did not die to make us good, as the childish hymn states ; but to bring us to God : to make us, in fact, not moral imitators of moral perfection, but beings who, by beholding truth, were changed into its likeness.

MAX PLOWMAN.

SELECTED FICTION.

HE OLIVE FIELD, by Ralph Bates. *Cape.* 8*s.* 6*d.*
OUTH RIDING, by Winifred Holtby. *Collins.* 8*s.*
ALKA VALKA, by Halldor Laxness. Translated by F. H. Lyon. *Allen & Unwin.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

R. WYNDHAM LEWIS—that alert and rivateering critic who occasionally akes a dash at our fiction—once evised what he called "the taxi-river's test" for novels. When a novel as being generally talked about and acked by reviewers as a work of litera-ure, Mr. Lewis would ask his taxi-river to step in and open the book at ny page, as one might cut a pack of ards. The two pages thus revealed ould then be read by Mr. Lewis, and is sample of the author's prose would nable him to decide whether the book as good or not; because, as he pointed ut, a genuine piece of literature is dividual in every paragraph and ntence, and such a test would discover is originality at once. But—you may claim—how unfair! Nearly all ovels, tried in that way, would look the me, and we really wouldn't be able to ll this one from the next!

Precisely, and that's the whole case gainst the novel. It is the least fferentiated form of writing. Whole apters, even in many of the best rrent novels, might have been written any novelist possessing a certain mpetence. Could you tell, after read-g a couple of pages of each, a Brett oung from a Frank Swinnerton, a alpole from a Priestley? No, gentle ader, you couldn't, no one could; and n afraid that's what you like about em.

If novels were fewer and shorter, there would be chances of returning to a higher standard. The *length* of an average novel, for what the writer has to say, is utterly fantastic; he has an idea (one, perhaps two ideas!), he writes 300 pages; and these pages, of course, are padded with irrelevant detail of every kind, descriptions of scenery one has read before, conversations one hears every day in the bus. A test such as Mr. Lewis's reveals the featureless boredom of such composition with startling vividness.

The Olive Field, *Salka Valka* and *South Riding* are all long, immensely long. This, in my view, is a fault in itself; however, that is disputable. Mr. Bates's is the only novel of the three which would survive the taxi-driver's test. Before reading it I dipped into a page here and there and received the impression of a massy splendour, the sentences moving slowly across like those slow sunlit clouds one sometimes sees in an August sky. Since writing his last book he has improved his style out of all recognition, so that now it reflects the Spanish landscape he is describing, it carries the weight of Spanish words studded over the page, and the peculiar erudition of Mr. Bates's mind. On the side of fact, *The Olive Field* is packed with fascinating material about the Revolution in Spain, about olive fields, guitar music, local habits and character. That in itself would not be enough to make it a good novel, but, as I say, Mr. Bates has assimilated all this material—often intractable enough—his book is tremendously alive and he writes with the passion and caution of a true artist. His fifty

or so characters are not merely the expression of the need, felt by so many English novelists, to paint a broad canvas; they are there, moving naturally and individually, and contained by the vision of Spanish life and landscape from which Mr. Bates writes. On almost every page that vision, centred on the olive field which gives the story its title, burns itself into the reader's mind. We see it, vivid and unalterable, with the ash-grey shapes of its trees in sunlight, the men picking or grafting, the long days passing. The traditional toil of centuries and the new life which the toilers aim at making for themselves are brought together stubbornly and beautifully into a picture; we see them as a single thing, and that is the proof of Mr. Bates's success. As a writer Mr. Bates might be described as a lyrical realist, and his particular quality is a powerfulness, rare at the moment among sensitive writers, which is never assumed. *The Olive Field* is slow, emphatic and impressive. It is, I think, too long. The preliminary descriptions, when a new landscape or a new character is introduced, would improve with cutting; and in parts of the story I felt that a tendency to divide the prose into blocks of narrative and of dialogue might have been varied. But it is a fine achievement. I recommend it to all readers except gadflies, for Mr. Bates is a writer who improves with every book he writes and for those who cast a glance forward in literature now is the time to begin reading him.

Salka Valka and *South Riding* seem to me big without grandeur: they have all the quality of largeness except largeness of vision. The Communism in the first is, artistically, spurious; compare it with Mr. Bates's.

Miss Holtby's novel—unfortunately her last—may be recommended to admirers of her charming talent.

G. W. STONIER.

AN ORDINARY LIFE, by Karel Capek. *George Allen & Unwin.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

SIXTH OF JUNE, by Stanley Hopkins. *Cape.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

X PLUS Y, by E. F. Bozman. *Dent.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

VENUS OVER LANNERY, by Martin Armstrong. *Gollancz.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

ORDINARY people, it seems, are increasing in popularity. Perhaps it is the deafening clamour of the big drums of today that drives us to the oaten pipe. The world is so full of rushing mighty winds that the still small voice is occasionally both comforting and diverting, but such a warren of ordinary lives as is presented in four novels this month is apt to leave the reviewer longing for lordlier game. Prolonged study of a large block of flats makes the Albert Memorial seem an exciting, even a beautiful object of contemplation.

Karel Capek has always been a good hand with a sow's ear. He deliberately chooses such unpromising materials for the delight of spinning silk out of them. His latest experiment in alchemy, wherein a Czech stationmaster recounts the simple progress of his life only to discover that it has been very, very complicated, displays once again a luminous style, a selective eye for detail and a love of looking at things from all possible angles. It might be either a plan for a novel or a series of reflections after reading one, but I cannot feel that it constitutes a novel in itself. Its virtues are many, and the reader's interest in an "ordinary" life is sustained, with but few lapses, to the last page. Its fault is perhaps the commonest fault in the better class of contemporary fiction—a fault of form. It is formal defects, again, which mar Mr. Hopkins' second novel. Close observation, intelligent invention, crisp dialogue and an impartial attitude to a variety of characters—all these suggest an early and remarkable maturity. The *milieu*, too, has its undoubted interest for the

nglish reader, who is transported to a nall Virginian township where "nearly veryone had made one trip to Europe r gone on visits to rich relations in the orth. Almost everyone had a cousin in ne government at Washington and some othes that had been bought in New ork." Nearly everyone, that is to say, d a life as fascinating to the uninitiated bserver as the hidden joys and tumults f infancy. But the Sixth of June, on hich day the whole of the action takes lace, is not, as it ought to be, a day of isis. True, there is a wedding, and ertain decisions are taken and certain ves changed. But the dramatic adantages of a respect for the unity of me are not utilized, and one suspects nat, apart from the traditional cereonies of the Sixth, the Seventh of June as very much the same.

Cavil at *Sixth of June* demands nsure for Mr. Bozman's novel. The ritation caused by referring throughut the book to two characters as X" (male) and "Y" (female) can e forgiven as a legitimate eccentricity f genius of which there is no evidence ere. "And she went, leaving her bedoom in its customary muddle, with all s imperfections on her bed, and her tter to Auntie Nina unsealed, unblotted, nd unstamped". So much for the anner; as for the matter, there is no pace here to outline a plot which says nd bellies by turns.

Plots, indeed, are hard to come by nese days. Even Mr. Martin Armstrong annot find a very good one. After *Plus Y* it is refreshing to turn to an uthor who maintains towards the reations of his pen a prudent detachent, but the difference of outlook beveen youth and age, which is the bald neme of *Venus Over Lannery*, fails even nder his skilful guidance to be absorbg. Lannery is a country house thrown pen to her friends of all ages by its wise nd amiable hostess, Mrs. Dryden. Venus is in the ascendant over the speculations and reminiscences of eld and the torments and discoveries of youth. Very naturally, the greater part of the conversation is exceedingly trite, for this is a realistic novel. Those who pick it up, therefore (as many people do pick up novels) to relieve the banality of existence, will find nothing but a mirror to their own boredom; and I am not sure that that is quite fair. There is certainly a murder in it, committed by the one person who has the courage to belong more to fiction than to fact. But even that is turned all to favour and to prettiness, and made to subserve those verities whose very eternity makes them wearisome. The notion that the camera cannot lie has now been exploded, and it is high time that our kodak-novelists recovered their mendacity. Mr. Armstrong's technique is quite good enough to make him a most formidable liar, if he would only take the plunge.

FRANCIS WATSON.

OTHER BOOKS RECEIVED.

A PALADIN OF ARABIA, by Major N. N. E. Bray. (*Unicorn Press.*)

MONOGRAM, by G. B. Stern. (*Chapman & Hall.*)

EVEREST, THE CHALLENGE, by Sir Francis Younghusband. (*Nelson.*)

MODERN IRELAND, by Cicely Hamilton. (*Dent.*)

THE OLD MAN'S COMING, by Gustaf Janson. (*Lovat Dickson.*)

A MAN FORBID, by Elsie Reed. (*Cape.*)

UNCLE, GIVE US BREAD, by Arne Strorn. (*Allen & Unwin.*)

AMERICA CAME MY WAY, by Sir Anthony Jenkinson. (*Barker.*)

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Other affairs are so completely overshadowed by the Locarno crisis that **Stephen Gwynn** has concentrated this month on the subject that occupies all minds instead of writing his usual Commentary.

André Siegfried's writings are a familiar and much-valued feature of the FORTNIGHTLY. His last contributions to these pages, the series of economic studies entitled "Britain and the World Crisis" appeared in the spring of last year. *America Comes of Age*, a book which firmly established his reputation as a philosophic student of American conditions, appeared in 1927.

Ethel Smyth, distinguished composer and friend of Brahms, has since the war written a succession of lively and entertaining books of reminiscence, which have been widely read. The latest of them, *As Time Went On*, from which the present sketch is taken, is due to appear shortly from the house of Longmans. Of her music, which is heard all too rarely in London, the best known is her opera *The Wreckers*, produced at Leipzig and in London, and the comic opera, *The Boatswain's Mate*, 1915.

Apart from his novels, **Compton Mackenzie** is a zealous worker for Scottish Nationalism. As a "man who loves islands," he has made his home on Barra in the Outer Hebrides.

St. John Philby, as the greatest living authority on Arabia, has a natural interest in the ultimate reactions of Italy's adventure in the neighbouring country of Abyssinia. He lives in Mecca, is much occupied in mapping the country, and is at present working on a book on the Wahhabi Empire.

Harrison Brown was a very well-known free lance journalist in Berlin up to the beginning of the Hitler regime but then returned to England. He is a frequent visitor to America, and articles from him appear in the British press during his lecture tours there, from the last of which he has recently returned.

C. F. Maude is a former member of the Mount Everest Committee and former vice-president of the Alpine Club, and has spent three seasons exploring the Himalayas.

Wilbur Burton is an American journalist on the China coast.

Professor Catlin besides having been a lecturer on politics and history at Sheffield and Cornell, writes a good deal on the principles of politics, and stood as Socialist candidate at the last election.

Clemence Dane, better known as a playwright than an author, is at present engaged on the rehearsals of her new play *The Happy Hypocrite* (an adaptation of a short story by Max Beerbohm) which will open early this month in London.

Hubert Griffith is not only a dramatic critic and playwright, but an ardent admirer of the new Russia.

Albert Jarosy is a Hungarian musician and novelist. His stories, of which this is the third to appear in the FORTNIGHTLY, show a very individual talent, many of them being inspired by his own experiences in Russia, where he was a prisoner for five years.